

BOYS AND GIRLS



George Eliot
1906

From
GEORGE ELIOT



Class PR 4689

Book S9

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT

BOYS AND GIRLS *from*
GEORGE ELIOT

¶



MAGGIE TULLIVER.

Boys and Girls *from George Eliot*

By

Kate Dickinson Sweetser

(Author of "*Ten Girls from Dickens*")

Pictures by

GEORGE ALFRED WILLIAMS



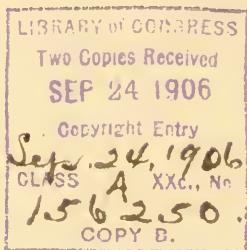
NEW YORK

Duffield & Company

MCMVI

C O P Y R I G H T , 1906 , B Y
D U F F I E L D & C O M P A N Y
P u b l i s h e d S e p t e m b e r , 1906

PRA 689
89



THE HERALD COMPANY OF BINGHAMTON
BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

PREFACE

AMONG the novels of the great English writer, George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), it is the exception to find one which does not contain a pretty picture of child life. And always the children are bright, active, normal children, who even when they have nothing to do with the development of the plot, yet are great additions to the novels from which they are taken, just because they are such true pictures of boys and girls as they exist in everyday life. It is for this reason that they have been thought worthy of being gathered together in a single volume. If the boys and girls who read about them are interested in Tom and Maggie,—a true history of George Eliot's youthful experience with the brother only three years older than herself; in Eppie, the weaver's adopted daughter; and in the other children whose pranks and pastimes are here related,—and if they follow up these stories by turning to the books from which they have been taken, then will the volume have served its purpose well; for only as a means to an end, and that end the reading of George Eliot's novels by the young people of to-day, has it been compiled.

K. D. S.

CONTENTS

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER	3
TOTTY POYSER	77
EPPIE	101
THE GARTHS	139
LITTLE LIZZIE	151
JACOB COHEN	161
TINA—"THE LITTLE BLACK-EYED MONKEY" . .	187
JOB TUDGE AND HARRY TRANSOME	201

TOM AND MAGGIE
TULLIVER



TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER.

BOYS AND GIRLS

from GEORGE ELIOT

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

A WIDE plain, where the River Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace. On this tide the black ships—laden with the fresh-scented fir-planks, with sacks of oil-bearing seed, or with the dark glitter of coal—are borne along to the town of St. Ogg's. Just by the ancient red-roofed town the tributary River Ripple flows with a lively current into the Floss. How lovely the little river is with its dark, changing wavelets!

And this is Dorlcote Mill! It is pleasant to look at, the trimly kept, comfortable house, as old as the elms and chestnuts that shelter it from the northern blasts. The rush of the water and the booming of the mill are like a great curtain of sound shutting one out from the world beyond. And now there is the thunder of the huge waggon coming home with sacks of grain. That honest waggoner is thinking of his dinner, but he will not touch it till he has fed his horses,—the strong, submissive, meek-eyed beasts, who stretch their shoulders up the slope toward the bridge with all the more energy because they are near home. Now they are on the

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

bridge, and down they go again at a swifter pace; then the waggon disappears behind the trees.

Beside the mill stands a little girl watching the unresting wheel sending out its diamond jets of water. And a queer white cur with a brown ear seems to be leaping and barking because he is jealous that his playfellow in the beaver bonnet is so rapt in the movement of the wheel. It is time the little playfellow went in, so she slowly turns toward the house, where she finds her mother and father sitting by a bright fire, discussing a most important question.

"What I want, you know," Mr. Tulliver was saying, "is to give Tom a good eddication; an eddication as 'll be a bread to him. Th' two years at th' academy 'ud done well enough, if I'd meant to make a miller nor farmer of him, for he's had a fine sight more schoolin' nor *I* ever got. All the learnin' *my* father ever paid for was a bit o' birch at one end and the alphabet at th' other. But I should like Tom to be a bit of a scholard, so as he might be up to the tricks o' these fellows as talk fine and write wi' a flourish. It 'ud be a help to me wi' these lawsuits, and arbitrations, and things."

Mr. Tulliver was addressing his wife, a blonde, comely woman, who replied: "Well, Mr. Tulliver, you know best; *I've* no objections. But hadn't I better kill a couple o' fowl, and have the aunts and uncles to dinner next week, so as you may hear what Sister Glegg and Sister Pullet have got to say about it? There's a couple o' fowl *wants* killing!"

"You may kill every fowl i' th' yard if you like, Bessy, but I shall ask neither aunt nor uncle what I'm to do wi' my own lad," said Mr. Tulliver defiantly.

"Dear heart!" exclaimed Mrs. Tulliver. "How can you talk so, Mr. Tulliver! However, if Tom's to go to a new school, I should like him to go where I can wash him and

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

mend him, else he might as well have calico as linen, for they'd be one as yallow as th' other before they'd been washed half a dozen times. And then, when the box is goin' backard and forward, I could send the lad a cake, or a pork pie, or an apple, for he can do wi' an extry bit, bless him, whether they stint him at the meals or no."

"Well, well, we won't send him out o' reach o' the carrier's cart, not if other things fit in," said Mr. Tulliver. "But it's an uncommon puzzling thing to know what school to pick. I know what I'll do; I'll talk it over wi' Riley; he's coming to-morrow, t' arbitrate about the dam. He's had schooling himself, and we shall have time to talk it over when the business is done."

"Well," said Mrs. Tulliver, "if Tom's to go and live at Mudport, like Riley, he'll have a house with a kitchen hardly big enough to turn in, an' niver get a fresh egg for his breakfast, an' sleep up three pair of stairs—or four, for what I know—an' be burnt to death before he can get down."

"No, no," said Mr. Tulliver, "I've no thoughts of his going to Mudport; I mean him to set up his office at St. Ogg's, and live at home. But," he continued, "what I'm a bit afraid on is, as Tom hasn't got th' right sort o' brains for a smart fellow. I doubt he's a bit slowish. He takes after your family, Bessy."

"Yes, that he does," said Mrs. Tulliver, accepting the proposition entirely on its own merits. "He's wonderful for liking a deal o' salt in his broth. That was my brother's way, and my father's before him."

"It seems a bit of a pity, though," said Mr. Tulliver. "The little 'un takes after my side; now, she's twice as cute as Tom. Too cute for a woman, I'm afraid," he said, "though it's no mischief much now, while she's a little 'un."

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

"Yes, it *is* a mischief while she's a little 'un, Mr. Tulliver, for it all runs to naughtiness. How to keep her in a clean pinafore two hours together passes my cunning. An' now you put me i' mind," continued Mrs. Tulliver, going to the window, "I don't know where she is now, an' it's pretty nigh tea time. Ah, I thought so—wanderin' up and down by the water, like a wild thing."

Mrs. Tulliver rapped the window sharply, beckoned, and shook her head—a process which she repeated more than once before she returned to her chair.

"You talk o' cuteness, Mr. Tulliver," she observed as she sat down; "but I'm sure the child's half an idiot i' some things; for if I send her upstairs to fetch anything, she forgets what she's gone for, an' perhaps 'ull sit down on the floor i' the sunshine an' plait her hair an' sing to herself like a bedlam creatur', all the while I'm waiting for her downstairs. That niver run i' my family, no more nor a brown skin as makes her look like a mulatter. I don't like to fly i' the face o' Providence, but it seems hard as I should have but one gell, an' her so comical."

"Pooh, nonsense," said Mr. Tulliver; "she's a straight black-eyed wench as anybody need wish to see."

"But her hair won't curl, and she's so franzy about having it put i' paper, and I've such work as never was to make her stand and have it pinched with th' irons."

"Cut it off—cut it off short," said her father rashly.

"How can you talk so, Mr. Tulliver? She's too big a gell—gone nine, and tall of her age—to have her hair cut short; and there's her cousin Lucy's got a row o' curls round her head, and not a hair out o' place. I'm sure Lucy takes more after me nor my own child does. Maggie, Maggie!" continued the mother, in a tone of half-coaxing fretfulness, as this small mistake of nature entered the room, "where's the

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

use o' my tellin' you to keep away from the water? You'll tumble in and be drownded some day, and then you'll be sorry you didn't do as mother told you."

Maggie's hair, as she threw off her bonnet, painfully confirmed her mother's accusation. Mrs. Tulliver, desiring her daughter to have a curled crop, "like other folk's children," had had it cut too short in front to be pushed behind the ears; and as it was usually straight an hour after it had been taken out of paper, Maggie was incessantly tossing her head to keep the dark, heavy locks out of her gleaming black eyes—an action which gave her very much the air of a small Shetland pony.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! Maggie, what are you thinkin' of, to throw your bonnet down there? Take it upstairs, there's a good gell, an' let your hair be brushed, an' put your other pinafore on, an' change your shoes,—do, for shame; an' come an' go on with your patchwork, like a little lady."

"Oh, mother!" said Maggie in a vehemently cross tone, "I don't *want* to do my patchwork."

"What! not your pretty patchwork, to make a counter-pane for your Aunt Glegg!"

"It's foolish work," said Maggie, with a toss of her mane, "tearing things to pieces to sew 'em together again, and I don't want to do anything for my Aunt Glegg—I don't like her."

Exit Maggie, dragging her bonnet by the string, while Mr. Tulliver laughs audibly.

"I wonder at you, as you'll laugh at her, Mr. Tulliver," said the mother, with feeble fretfulness in her tone. "You encourage her i' naughtiness. An' her aunts will have it as it's me spoils her."

On the following evening Mr. Riley arrived; and, after their business transaction came to an end, Mr. Tulliver,

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

according to his decision, said, "I want to speak to you now about my boy Tom, Riley."

At the sound of Tom's name, Maggie, who was seated by the fire with a large book open on her lap, shook her heavy hair back and looked up eagerly.

"I want to send him," continued Mr. Tulliver, "to a downright good school where they'll make a scholard o' him. I don't mean Tom to be a miller nor farmer; then he'd be a-hintin' at me as it was time to lay by and think o' my latter end. Nay, nay, I've seen enough o' that wi' sons. I shall put Tom to a business, as he may make a nest for himself, and not want to push me out o' mine!"

Mr. Tulliver spoke with unusual rapidity and emphasis, which angry symptoms were keenly observed by Maggie, and cut her to the quick. Tom, it appeared, was supposed capable of turning his father out of doors and of making the future in some way tragic by his wickedness. This was not to be borne; and Maggie jumped up, forgetting her book, which fell with a bang, and going up to her father, cried out, "Father, Tom wouldn't be naughty to you ever; I know he wouldn't!"

"What! they mustn't say any harm o' Tom, eh?" said Mr. Tulliver, with a certain tenderness in his hard-lined face, patting his little girl on the back; then held her hands and kept her between his knees, and spoke to Mr. Riley as though Maggie couldn't hear: "She understands what one's talking about so as never was, and you should hear her read, straight off, as if she knowed it all beforehand. And allas at her book! Bless you!"—this with exultation—"she'll understand the books better nor half the folks as are growed up."

Maggie's cheeks began to flush with triumphant excitement. She thought Mr. Riley would have a respect for her

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

now. He meanwhile was looking at her book, which he had picked up, and presently said to her, "Come and tell me something about this book; I want to know what the pictures mean."

Maggie went to his elbow and, eagerly seizing one corner of the book and tossing back her mane, said:

"Oh, I'll tell you what that means. That old woman in the water's a witch—they've put her in to find out whether she's a witch or no, and if she swims she's a witch, and if she's drowned she's innocent, and not a witch, but only a poor, silly, old woman. But what good would it do her then, you know, when she was drowned? Only I suppose she'd go to heaven, and God would make it up to her. And this dreadful blacksmith with his arms akimbo, laughing—oh! isn't he ugly?—I'll tell you what he is. He's the Devil, *really*, for the devil has oftener the shape of a bad man than any other, because, you know, if people saw he was the devil, and he roared at them, they'd run away, and he couldn't make them do what he pleased."

Mr. Tulliver had listened to this exposition of Maggie's with petrifying wonder.

"Why, what book is it the wench has got hold on?" he burst out at last.

"The 'History of the Devil,' by Daniel Defoe—not quite the right book for a little girl," said Mr. Riley. "How came it among your books, Mr. Tulliver?"

Maggie looked hurt and discouraged, while her father said:

"Why, it's one o' th' books I bought at Partridge's sale. They was all bound alike, and I thought they'd all be good books. There's Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Living and Dying' among 'em. But it seems one mustn't judge by th' outside."

"Well," said Mr. Riley, patting Maggie on the head, "I

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

advise you to put by the ‘History of the Devil.’ Have you no prettier books?”

“Oh, yes,” said Maggie, “I’ve got ‘Æsop’s Fables,’ and a book about kangaroos and things, and the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress.’”

“Ah, a beautiful book,” said Mr. Riley, “you can’t read a better.”

“Well, there’s a great deal about the devil in that,” said Maggie triumphantly, “and I’ll show you the picture of him in his true shape as he fought with Christian.”

Maggie ran to a small bookcase and reached down an old copy of Bunyan, which opened at once to the picture she wanted.

“Here he is,” she said, running back to Mr. Riley, “and Tom coloured him for me with his paints, the body all black, you know, and the eyes red, like fire, because he’s all fire inside, and it shines out at his eyes.”

“Go, go!” said Mr. Tulliver peremptorily. “Shut up the book and let’s hear no more o’ such talk. It is as I thought—the child ’ull learn more mischief nor good wi’ the books. Go, go and see after your mother.”

Maggie shut up the book at once, with a sense of disgrace, but not being inclined to see after her mother, she compromised the matter by going into a dark corner behind her father’s chair, and nursing her doll, toward which she had an occasional fit of fondness in Tom’s absence, lavishing so many warm kisses on it that the waxen cheeks had a wasted unhealthy appearance.

“Did you ever hear th’ like on’t?” said Mr. Tulliver, as Maggie retired. “It’s a pity but what she’d been the lad—she’d ‘a’ been a match for the lawyers, she would.”

“But your lad is not stupid, is he?” asked Mr. Riley.

“Well, he isn’t not to say stupid—he’s got a notion o’

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

things out o' door, an' a sort o' common sense, as he'd lay hold o' things by the right handle. But he's slow with his tongue, and he reads but poorly, and can't abide the books, and spells all wrong, they tell me, and as shy as can be wi' strangers, and you never hear him say cute things like the little wench. Now, I want to send him to a school where they'll make him a bit nimble wi' his tongue and his pen, and make a smart chap of him. I dare say, now, you know of a school as 'ud be just th' thing for him," said Mr. Tulliver.

Mr. Riley did know of such an one, conducted by a clergyman, Mr. Stelling by name, who for a moderate sum was willing to instruct youths in the rudiments of English and the classics; and to this gentleman's care Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver later decided to entrust Tom at midsummer.

It was a disappointment to Maggie that she was not allowed to go with her father in the gig to fetch Tom home from the Academy to prepare to go to the new school; but the morning was too wet, Mrs. Tulliver said, for a little girl to go out in her best bonnet. Maggie took the opposite view very strongly, and in consequence of this difference of opinion, when her mother was brushing out the reluctant black crop, Maggie suddenly rushed from under her hands and dipped her head in a basin of water, in the vindictive determination that there should be no more chance of curls that day.

"Maggie, Maggie!" exclaimed Mrs. Tulliver; "what is to become of you if you're so naughty? I'll tell your Aunt Glegg and your Aunt Pullet, and they'll never love you any more. Oh, dear, oh, dear! Look at your clean pinafore, wet from top to bottom."

Before this remonstrance was finished, Maggie was already out of hearing, making her way toward the great

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

attic that was her favourite retreat. Here she fretted out all her ill humours, and talked aloud to the worm-eaten floors and the worm-eaten shelves, and the dark rafters festooned with cobwebs; and here she kept a Fetish which she punished for all her misfortunes. This was a large wooden doll, which once stared with the roundest of eyes above the roundest of cheeks; but was now entirely defaced by a long career of vicarious suffering. Three nails driven into the head commemorated as many crises in Maggie's nine years of earthly struggle; that luxury of vengeance having been suggested to her by the picture of Jael destroying Sisera in the old Bible. The last nail had been driven in with a fiercer stroke than usual, for the fetish on that occasion represented Aunt Glegg. But immediately afterward Maggie had reflected that if she drove many nails in, she would not be so well able to fancy that the head was hurt when she knocked it against the wall, nor to comfort it, and make believe to poultice it, when her fury was abated. Since then she had driven no more nails in, but had soothed herself by alternately grinding and beating the wooden head against the great chimneys that made two pillars supporting the roof. That was what she did this morning on reaching the attic, sobbing until, standing by the window, she saw that the sun was breaking out, the sound of the mill seemed cheerful again, the granary doors were open, and there was Yap, the terrier, trotting about and sniffing vaguely as if he were in search of a companion. It was irresistible. Maggie ran downstairs, dashed along the passage lest she should encounter her mother, and was quickly out in the yard, whirling around and singing as she whirled, "Yap, Yap, Tom is coming home!" while Yap danced and barked around her.

"Hegh, hegħ, Miss, you'll make yourself giddy, an' tumble down i' th' dirt," said Luke, the head miller.

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

Maggie paused in her whirling, and said, staggering a little, "Oh, no, it doesn't make me giddy, Luke; may I go into the mill with you?"

Maggie loved to linger in the great spaces of the mill, and often came out with her black hair powdered to a whiteness that made her dark eyes flash out with new fire. The resolute din, the unresting motion of the great stones, the meal forever pouring, pouring, the fine white powder softening all surfaces and making the very spider-nets look like a fairy lace work, the sweet, pure scent of the meal—all helped to make her feel that the mill was a little world apart from her everyday life. But she liked best the corn-hutch where there were great heaps of grain which she could sit on and slide down continually. Now, as she sat sliding on the heap near where Luke was busy, she said, "I think you never read any book but the Bible, did you, Luke?"

"Nay, Miss, an' not much o' that," said Luke, with great frankness. "I'm no reader, I aren't."

"Why, you're like my brother Tom, Luke," said Maggie, wishing to make the conversation agreeable; "Tom's not fond of reading, but I think he's clever, too, for all he doesn't like books—he makes beautiful whip-cord and rabbit pens."

"Ah," said Luke, "but he'll be fine and vexed, as the rabbits are all dead."

"Dead!" screamed Maggie, jumping up; "what! the lop-eared one and the spotted doe that he spent all his money to buy?"

"As dead as moles," said Luke; "you see, Miss, they were in that far tool house, and it was nobody's business to see to 'em."

"Oh, dear, Luke," said Maggie, while the big tears rolled down her cheek: "Tom told me to take care of 'em every day, and I forgot. How could I remember when they didn't

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

come into my head, you know? Oh! he will be so angry with me, and so sorry about his rabbits, and so am I sorry. Oh, what *shall* I do?"

"Don't you fret, Miss," said Luke soothingly, "they're nash things, them lop-eared rabbits; they'd happen ha' died if they'd been fed. Master Tom will know better nor buy such things another time. Don't you fret, Miss. Will you come along home wi' me and see my wife? I'm a-goin' this minute."

The invitation offered an agreeable distraction to Maggie's grief, and her tears gradually subsided as she trotted along by Luke's side to his pleasant cottage, where his wife exhibited her hospitality in bread and treacle, and showed Maggie so many works of art that she actually forgot for the time being that she had any special cause for sadness, and did not dwell upon it painfully again until the hour for Tom's arrival approached.

At last the sound of the gig wheels was heard, and in spite of the wind, Mrs. Tulliver came outside the door, and even held her hand on Maggie's offending head, forgetting all the griefs of the morning.

"There he is, my sweet lad! But Lord ha' mercy! he's got never a collar on; it's been lost on the road, I'll be bound, and spoilt the set."

Mrs. Tulliver stood with her arms open. Maggie jumped first on one leg and then on the other, while Tom descended from the gig and said with masculine reticence as to the tender emotion, "Hello! Yap—what! are you there?"

Nevertheless he submitted to be kissed, while his blue-grey eyes wandered towards the croft and the lambs and the river, where he promised himself that he would begin to fish the first thing to-morrow morning. He was one of those lads that grow everywhere in England—a lad with light-

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

brown hair, cheeks of cream and roses, full lips, indeterminate nose and eyebrows—a face in which it seems impossible to discern anything but the generic character of boyhood.

“Maggie,” said Tom confidentially, later, “you don’t know what I’ve got in my pockets!”

“No,” said Maggie, “how stodgy they look, Tom! Is it marls (marbles) or cobnuts?” Maggie’s heart sank a little, because Tom always said it was “no good” playing with her at those games, she played so badly.

“Marls! no; I’ve swopped all my marls with the little fellows, and cobnuts are no fun, you silly, only when the nuts are green. But see here!” He drew something half out of his right-hand pocket.

“What is it?” said Maggie, in a whisper. “I can see nothing but a bit of yellow.”

“Why, it’s—a—new—— Guess, Maggie!”

“Oh, I can’t guess, Tom,” said Maggie impatiently.

“Don’t be a spitfire, else I won’t tell you,” said Tom, thrusting his hand back into his pocket and looking determined.

“No,” said Maggie, imploringly, laying hold of the arm that was held stiffly in the pocket. “I’m not cross, Tom, it was only because I can’t bear guessing. Please be good to me.”

Tom’s arm slowly relaxed, and he said, “Well, then, it’s a new fishline—*two* new ‘uns—one for you, Maggie, all to yourself. I wouldn’t go halves in the toffee and gingerbread on purpose to save the money; and Gibson and Spouncer fought with me because I wouldn’t. And here’s hooks; see here—I say, won’t we go and fish to-morrow down by the Round Pool? And you shall catch your own fish, Maggie, and put the worms on, and everything—won’t it be fun?”

Maggie’s answer was to throw her arms round Tom’s

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

neck and hug him, and hold her cheek against his without speaking, while he slowly unwound some of the line, saying, after a pause:

“Wasn’t I a good brother, now, to buy you a line all to yourself? You know, I needn’t have bought it, if I hadn’t liked.”

“Yes, very, very good—I do love you, Tom.”

Tom had put the line back in his pocket before he spoke again.

“And the fellows fought me, because I wouldn’t give in about the toffee.”

“Oh, dear! I wish they wouldn’t fight at your school, Tom. Didn’t it hurt you?”

“Hurt me? No,” said Tom; “I gave Spouncer a black eye, I know; that’s what he got by wanting to leather me; I wasn’t going to go halves because anybody leathered me.”

“Oh, how brave you are, Tom! I think you’re like Samson. If there came a lion roaring at me, I think you’d fight him, wouldn’t you, Tom?”

“How can a lion come roaring at you, you silly thing? There’s no lions, only in the shows.”

“No; but if we were in the lion countries—I mean in Africa, where it’s very hot; the lions eat people there. I can show it you in the book where I read it.”

“Well, I should get a gun and shoot him.”

“But if you hadn’t got a gun—we might have gone out, you know, not thinking, just as we go fishing; and then a great lion might run toward us roaring, and we couldn’t get away from him. What should you do, Tom?”

“Oh, don’t bother, Maggie! you’re such a silly. I shall go and see my rabbits.”

Maggie’s heart began to flutter with fear. She dared not tell the sad truth at once, but she walked after Tom in

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

trembling silence as he went out, thinking how she could tell him the news so as to soften at once his sorrow and his anger; for Maggie dreaded Tom's anger of all things; it was quite a different anger from her own.

"Tom," she said, timidly, "how much money did you give for your rabbits?"

"Two half-crowns and a sixpence," said Tom promptly.

"I think I've got a great deal more than that in my steel purse upstairs. I'll ask mother to give it you."

"What for?" said Tom. "I've got a great deal more money than you, because I'm a boy. I always have half-sovereigns and sovereigns for my Christmas boxes, because I shall be a man, and you only have five-shilling pieces, because you're only a girl."

"Well, but, Tom—if mother would let me give you two half-crowns and a sixpence out of my purse to put into your pocket and spend, you know; and buy some more rabbits with it?"

"More rabbits? I don't want any more."

"Oh, but, Tom, they're all dead."

Tom stopped immediately in his walk and turned round toward Maggie. "You forgot to feed 'em, then, and Harry forgot?" he said, his colour heightening for a moment, but soon subsiding. "I'll pitch into Harry. I'll have him turned away—and I don't love you, Maggie. You sha'n't go fishing with me to-morrow. I told you to go and see the rabbits every day." He walked on again.

"Yes, but I forgot—and I couldn't help it, indeed, Tom. I'm so very sorry," said Maggie, while the tears rushed fast.

"You're a naughty girl," said Tom severely, "and I'm sorry I bought you the fishline. I don't love you. Last holidays you licked the paint off my lozenge box, and the holidays before that you let the boat drag my fishline down

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

when I'd set you to watch it, and you pushed your head through my kite, all for nothing."

"But I didn't mean to," said Maggie; "I couldn't help it."

"Yes, you could," said Tom, "if you'd minded what you were doing. And you're a naughty girl, and you sha'n't go fishing with me to-morrow."

With this terrible conclusion, Tom ran away toward the mill, to complain to Luke of Harry's negligence.

Maggie stood motionless for a minute or two, then she ran up to her attic, where she sat on the floor and sobbed aloud. She never thought of beating or grinding her fetish: she was too miserable to be angry, but it soon seemed as though she had been hours in the attic. Well, she would stay up there and starve herself—hide herself and stay there all night—and then they would all be frightened, and Tom would be sorry. Thus Maggie thought in the pride of her heart as she crept behind a tub; but presently she began to cry again at the idea that they didn't mind her being there. If she went down again to Tom now—would he forgive her? Perhaps her father would be there, and he would take her part. But, then, she wanted Tom to forgive her because he loved her, not because his father told him. No, she would never go down if Tom didn't come to fetch her. This resolution lasted in great intensity for five dark minutes behind the tub; then she crept out, and just then she heard a quick footstep on the stairs.

Tom had been too much interested in his talk with Luke in going the round of the premises to think of Maggie, and the effects his anger had produced on her. He meant to punish her, and that business having been performed, he occupied himself with other matters, like a practical person. But when he had been called in to tea, his father said, "Why,

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

where's the little wench?" and Mrs. Tulliver almost at the same moment said, "Where's your little sister?"

"I don't know," said Tom. "I haven't seen her this two hours."

"What! hasn't she been playing with you all this while?" said the father; "she'd been thinking o' nothing but your coming home."

"Perhaps she's up in the attic," said Mrs. Tulliver.

"You go and fetch her down, Tom," said Mr. Tulliver rather sharply, suspecting that the lad had been hard on the "little 'un," else she would never have left his side. "And be good to her, do you hear? Else I'll let you know better."

Tom never disobeyed his father, so he went out rather sullenly, and it was his step that Maggie heard on the stairs. Her heart began to beat violently with the sudden shock of hope. He only stood still at the top of the stairs, and said, "Maggie, you're to come down." But she rushed to him and clung round his neck, sobbing, "Oh, Tom, please forgive me—I can't bear it—I will always be good—always remember things—do love me—please, dear Tom!"

There were tender fibres in the lad that had been used to answer Maggie fondly. He actually began to kiss her in return and say, "Don't cry, then, Magsie; eat a bite o' cake!"

Maggie's sobs began to subside, and she put out her mouth for the cake and bit a piece; and then Tom bit a piece, just for company, and they ate together and rubbed each other's cheeks and brows and noses together while they ate, with a resemblance to two friendly ponies.

"Come along, Magsie, and have tea," said Tom, at last, when there was no more cake except what was downstairs.

So ended the sorrows of this day, and the next morning Maggie was trotting with her own fishing rod in one hand

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

and a handle of the basket in the other, stepping always by a peculiar gift in the muddiest places, and looking radiant because Tom was good to her. They were on their way to the Round Pool. The sight of the old favourite spot always heightened Tom's good humour, and he spoke to Maggie in the most amicable whispers as he opened the precious basket and prepared their tackle. He threw her line for her, and put the rod into her hand. Maggie thought it probable that the small fish would come to her hook and the large ones to Tom's. But she had forgotten all about the fish, and was looking dreamily at the glassy water, when Tom said in a loud whisper, "Look, look, Maggie!" and came running to prevent her from snatching her line away.

Maggie was frightened lest she had been doing something wrong, as usual, but presently Tom drew out her line and brought a large tench bouncing on the grass, while he exclaimed, "Oh, Magsie, you little duck, empty the basket."

Maggie was not conscious of unusual merit, but it was enough that Tom called her Magsie, and was pleased with her. There was nothing to mar her delight, and she thought it would make a very nice Heaven to sit by the pool in that way and never be scolded. She never knew she had a bite till Tom told her; but she liked fishing very much.

It was one of their happy mornings. They trotted along and sat down together with no thought that life would ever change much for them; they would only get bigger and not go to school, and it would always be like the holidays. And the mill with its booming; the great chestnut tree under which they played at houses; their own little river, the Ripple, where the banks seemed like home, and Tom was alway seeing the water rats, while Maggie gathered the purple plumy tops of the reeds—above all, the great Floss, along which they wandered with a sense of travel to see the rush-

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

ing spring tide come up like a hungry monster—these things would always be just the same to them, and people were at a disadvantage who lived on any other spot of the globe—so thought Tom and Maggie on that happy morning.

This was Easter week, and by the morrow the Tulliver household was all agog with preparation for a family party. Sister Glegg, Sister Pullet, and Sister Deane, with their husbands, and Sister Deane's model child, Lucy, were all coming to give their opinion about Tom's going to the new school.

On the day before the party, there were such suggestive scents as of plum-cakes in the oven and jellies in the hot state, that Tom and Maggie made many inroads into the kitchen, and were only induced to keep aloof for a time by being allowed to carry away a sufficient load of booty.

“Tom,” said Maggie, as they sat on the boughs of the elder tree, eating their jam-puffs, “shall you run away to-morrow?”

“No,” said Tom, slowly, when he had finished his puff, and was eyeing the third, which was to be divided between them—“no, I sha'n't.”

“Why, Tom? Because Lucy's coming?”

“No,” said Tom, opening his pocket-knife and holding it over the puff (it was a difficult problem to divide it into two equal parts). “What do I care about Lucy?”

“Is it the tipsy-cake, then?” said Maggie.

“No, you silly, that 'll be good the day after. It's the pudden. I know what the pudden's to be—apricot roll-up. Oh, my buttons!”

With this interjection, the knife descended on the puff, and it was in two, but Tom eyed the halves doubtfully. At last he said:

“Shut your eyes, Maggie.”

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

Maggie obeyed.

"Now, which 'll you have, Maggie, right hand or left?"

"I'll have that with the jam run out," said Maggie, keeping her eyes shut to please Tom.

"Why, you don't choose like that. You may have it if it comes to you fair, but I sha'n't give it you without. Right or left—you choose now. Ha-a-a!" said Tom in a tone of exasperation, as Maggie peeped. "You keep your eyes shut now, else you sha'n't have any."

Maggie's power of sacrifice did not extend so far, so she shut her eyes till Tom told her to "say which," and then she said, "Left hand."

"You've got it," said Tom, in rather a bitter tone.

"What! the bit with the jam run out? Oh, please, Tom, have it; I don't mind; I like the other. Please take this."

"No, I sha'n't," said Tom, almost crossly, beginning on his own inferior piece.

Maggie, thinking it was no use to contend further, began too, and ate up her half puff with considerable relish as well as rapidity. She didn't know he was looking at her; she was see-sawing on the elder bough, lost to everything but a vague sense of jam and idleness.

"Oh, you greedy thing!" said Tom, when she had swallowed the last morsel. He was conscious of having acted very fairly, and thought she ought to have considered this and made up to him for it.

Maggie turned quite pale. "Oh, Tom, why didn't you ask me? I wanted you to have it, you know I did!"

"I wasn't going to ask you for a bit. You might have thought of it without, when you knew I gave you the best bit. I wasn't going to do what wasn't fair, like Spouncer. He always takes the best bit if you don't punch him for it; and if you choose the best with your eyes shut, he changes his hands.

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

But if I go halfs, I'll go 'em fair; only I wouldn't be a greedy."

With this, Tom jumped down from his bough and threw a stone to Yap, who had also been looking on while the eatables vanished, with an agitation of his ears and feelings which could hardly have been without bitterness. Maggie, meanwhile, sat still and gave herself up to the keen sense of unmerited reproach for ten minutes, by which time resentment began to give way to the desire of reconciliation, and she jumped from her bough to look for Tom. He was no longer in the paddock behind the rick-yard; where was he likely to be gone, and Yap with him? Maggie ran to the bank where she could see far away toward the Floss. There was Tom, on his way to the great river, and he had another companion besides Yap—naughty Bob Jakin. Maggie felt sure that Bob was wicked without very distinctly knowing why, only when Tom had Bob for a companion he didn't mind about Maggie, and would never let her go with him.

It must be owned that Tom was fond of Bob's company. How could it be otherwise? Bob knew, directly he saw a bird's egg, whether it was a swallow's or a tomtit's, or a yellow-hammer's; he found out all the wasp's nests; he could set all sorts of traps; he could climb the trees like a squirrel; and had quite a magical power of detecting hedgehogs and stoats; and he had courage to do many things which indicated a daring spirit. Such qualities had a fascination for Tom; and every holiday-time Maggie was sure to have days of grief because he had gone off with Bob.

Well, there was no hope for it; he was gone now, and Maggie could think of no comfort but to fancy it was all different—refashioning her little world into just what she would like it to be. However, sooner than she had dared to

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

hope, Tom came back again, and reconciliation brought the day to a pleasant close.

On the next day, when Mrs. Tulliver's sisters were all assembled together, they were certainly a handsome group, and Mrs. Glegg was not the least handsome of the sisters, though Tom and Maggie considered her as the type of ugliness—Maggie's principal reason being Mrs. Tulliver's great efforts to induce the child to wear Aunt Glegg's worn-out clothes. In the instance of a leghorn bonnet and a dyed silk frock, Maggie, declaring that the frock smelt of nasty dye, had basted it with the roast beef the first Sunday she wore it, and finding this scheme answer, had later pumped on the bonnet with its green ribbons, so it had a general resemblance to a sage cheese garnished with withered lettuces. I must urge in excuse for Maggie that Tom had laughed at her in the bonnet, and said she looked like an old Judy. Aunt Pullet, too, made presents of clothes, but these were always pretty enough to please Maggie as well as her mother. Of all her sisters, Mrs. Tulliver preferred her sister Pullet. Maggie and Tom, on their part, thought her tolerable chiefly because she was not their Aunt Glegg. Tom always declined to go more than once during his holidays to see either of them. Both his uncles tipped him that once, of course, but at his Aunt Pullet's there were a great many toads to pelt in the cellar area, so that he preferred to visit her. Maggie shuddered at the toads, but liked her Uncle Pullet's musical snuff-box.

While the sisters were together exchanging news of a confidential nature, their conversation was curtailed by the appearance of little Lucy Deane. Maggie, with her hair rough as well as out of curl, rushed at once to Lucy, who put up the neatest little rosebud mouth to be kissed; everything about her was neat—her little round neck with the row of

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

coral beads, her little straight nose, her little clear eyebrows, her hazel eyes which looked up with shy pleasure at Maggie, taller by the head, though scarcely a year older. Maggie always looked at Lucy with delight. She was fond of fancying a world where people never got any larger than children of their own age, and she made the queen of it just like Lucy, with a little crown on her head, and a little sceptre in her hand—only the queen was Maggie herself in Lucy's form.

"Oh, Lucy," she burst out, after kissing her, "you'll stay with Tom and me, won't you? Oh, kiss her, Tom."

Tom, too, had come up to Lucy, but he was not going to kiss her—no; he came up to her with Maggie, because it seemed easier than saying "how do you do?" to all those aunts and uncles; then he stood looking at nothing in particular, with the blushing awkward air and semi-smile which are common to shy boys when in company.

"Go and speak to your aunts and uncles, my dears," said Mrs. Tulliver, looking anxious and melancholy. She wanted to whisper to Maggie to go and have her hair brushed.

"Well, and how do you do? And I hope you're good children, are you?" said Aunt Glegg in the loud emphatic way she always addressed them.

"Well, my dears," said Aunt Pullet, in a compassionate voice, "you grow wonderful fast. I doubt they'll outgrow their strength," she added to their mother. "I'd have the gell's hair thinned and cut shorter, sister, if I was you; it isn't good for her health. It's that as makes her skin so brown, I shouldn't wonder."

"No, no," said Mr. Tulliver, "the child's healthy enough; there's nothing ails her. There's red wheat as well as white, for that matter, and some like the dark grain best. But it

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

'ud be as well if Bessy 'ud have the child's hair cut so as it 'ud lie smooth."

A dreadful resolve was gathering in Maggie's breast, but it was arrested by the desire to know from her Aunt Deane whether she would leave Lucy behind. After various reasons for refusal, Mrs. Deane appealed to Lucy herself.

"You wouldn't like to stay behind without mother, should you, Lucy?"

"Yes, please, mother," said Lucy, timidly, blushing very pink all over her little neck.

When this point of Lucy's staying was settled, Mrs. Tulliver whispered to Maggie, "Now go and get your hair brushed; do, for shame. I told you not to come in without going to Martha first; you know I did."

As Maggie left the room, she pulled Tom's sleeve in passing him. "Come upstairs with me," she whispered. "There's something I want to do before dinner."

Tom followed her upstairs willingly enough, and saw her go to a drawer in her mother's room, from which she took out a large pair of scissors.

"What are they for, Maggie?" said Tom, feeling his curiosity awakened.

Maggie answered by seizing her front locks, and cutting them straight across the middle of her forehead.

"Oh, my buttons, Maggie, you'll catch it!" exclaimed Tom. "You'd better not cut any more off."

Snip! went the great scissors again, while Tom was speaking, and he couldn't help feeling it was rather good fun; Maggie would look so queer.

"Here, Tom, cut it behind for me," said Maggie, excited by her own daring and anxious to finish the deed.

"You'll catch it, you know," said Tom, hesitating a little as he took the scissors.

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

"Never mind, make haste!" said Maggie, giving a little stamp with her foot. Her cheeks were quite flushed.

The black locks were so thick nothing could be more tempting to a lad who had already tasted the forbidden pleasure of cutting the pony's mane. One delicious grinding snip, and then another and another, and the hinder locks fell heavily on the floor and Maggie stood cropped in a jagged uneven manner, but with a sense of clearness and freedom, as if she had emerged from a wood into the open plain.

"Oh, Maggie," said Tom, jumping around her, and slapping his knees as he laughed. "What a queer thing you look! Look at yourself in the glass."

Maggie felt an unexpected pang. She looked in the glass, and still Tom laughed and clapped his hands, and Maggie's flushed cheeks began to pale, and her lips to tremble a little.

"Oh, Maggie, you'll have to go down to dinner directly," said Tom. "Oh, my!"

"Don't laugh at me, Tom," said Maggie, with an outburst of angry tears, stamping and giving him a push.

"Now, then, spit-fire!" said Tom. "What did you cut it off for then? I shall go down; I can smell the dinner going in."

He hurried downstairs, and left poor Maggie crying before the glass. She felt it impossible to go down to dinner, and endure the severe eyes and severe words of her aunts, while Tom and Lucy and Martha, who waited at table, and perhaps her father and uncles, would laugh at her; and if she had only let her hair alone, she could have sat with Tom and Lucy, and had the apricot pudding and the custard!

"Miss Maggie, you're to come down this minute," said Keziah, entering the room hurriedly. "Lorks! What have you been a-doing? I niver seed such a fright!"

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

"Don't, Keziah," said Maggie, angrily; "go away; I don't want any dinner; I sha'n't come."

"Maggie, you little silly," said Tom, peeping into the room, "why don't you come and have your dinner? There's lots o' goodies, and mother says you're to come."

Oh, it was dreadful! Tom was so hard and unconcerned; if he had been crying on the floor, Maggie would have cried too. And there was the dinner so nice, and she was so hungry. It was very bitter. But Tom was not altogether hard—he went and put his head near her, and said in a comforting tone, "Won't you come, then, Magsie? Shall I bring you a bit o' pudding, when I've had mine, and a custard, and things?"

"Ye-ye-yes," said Maggie, beginning to feel life a little more tolerable.

"Very well," said Tom, adding, "but you'd better come, you know. There's the dessert—nuts, you know, and cow-slip wine."

Maggie's tears had ceased. Tom's good nature had taken off the keenest edge of her suffering. Slowly she rose from amongst her scattered locks, and made her way downstairs, peeping in the dining-room door. She saw Tom and Lucy with an empty chair between them, and there were the custards on a side table; it was too much. She slipped in and went toward the empty chair. But she had no sooner sat down than she repented.

Mrs. Tulliver gave a scream as she saw her that made all eyes turn toward Maggie, while Uncle Glegg said, "Hey-dey, what little gell's this? Why, I don't know her. Is it some little gell you've picked up in the road, Keziah?"

"Why, she's gone and cut her hair herself," said Mr. Tulliver, laughing with much enjoyment. "Did you ever know such a little hussy as it is?"

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

"Why, little Miss, you've made yourself look very funny," said Uncle Pullet; while Aunt Glegg said severely, "Fie, for shame! Little gells as cut their own hair should be whipped, and fed on bread and water—not come and sit down with their aunts and uncles."

"She's more like a gypsy nor ever," said Aunt Pullet, in a pitying tone. "It's very bad luck, sister, as the gell should be so brown; the boy's fair enough. I doubt it 'll stand in her way i' life to be so brown."

"She's a naughty child, as 'll break her mother's heart," said Mrs. Tulliver, with tears in her eyes.

Maggie seemed to be listening to a chorus of reproach and derision. She felt convinced also that Tom was rejoicing in her ignominy. Her feeble power of defiance left her, her heart swelled, and getting up from her chair, she ran to her father, hid her face on his shoulder, and burst into loud sobbing.

"Come, come, my wench," said her father soothingly, putting his arms around her; "never mind, you was in the right to cut it off if it plagued you; give over crying—father'll take your part." Delicious words of tenderness! Maggie never forgot them. They were as balm for her wounds, and with the dessert, there came entire deliverance for her, for the children were told they might have their nuts and wine in the summer house, since the day was so mild, and Mrs. Tulliver was eager to communicate Mr. Tulliver's intention concerning Tom without the restraint of the children's presence. There was much opposition among the brothers and sisters to the plan for Tom's future, and a heated debate, which would have ended in a family quarrel, had not Mrs. Tulliver tactfully suggested that the sisters go out and join the children.

No proposition could have been more seasonable. There

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

were few things the men liked better than being left by themselves to discuss current topics without frivolous interruption, and so the visit ended peacefully for all.

The next day began ill with Maggie, for as early as eleven o'clock the hairdresser from St. Ogg's arrived and spoke in the severest terms of the condition in which he found her hair, holding up one jagged lock after another, and saying "See here! Tut, tut, tut!" in a tone of mingled disgust and pity, which to Maggie's imagination was equivalent to the strongest expression of public opinion.

In the afternoon the children were to pay a visit with Mrs. Tulliver to Garum Firs, Aunt Pullet's home, and the preparation for a visit being always a serious affair, by twelve o'clock Maggie was frowning and twisting her shoulders in the prickliest of tuckers, and Tom's cheeks were looking particularly brilliant as a relief to his best blue suit, which he wore with becoming calmness, having, after a little wrangling, effected what was always the one point of interest to him in his toilet—he had transferred all the contents of his everyday pockets to those actually in wear.

As for Lucy, she was just as pretty and neat as she had been yesterday, and looked with wondering pity at Maggie pouting and writhing under the exasperating tucker. They were allowed to build card houses till dinner as a suitable amusement for boys and girls in their best clothes. Tom could build perfect pyramids of houses, but Maggie could never bear the laying on of the roof. It happened that Lucy proved wonderfully clever at building, and that Tom condescended to admire her houses, the more readily because she had asked him to teach her. Maggie, too, would have admired them without ill-temper if her tucker had not made her peevish, and if Tom had not laughed when her houses fell and told her she was a stupid.

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

"Don't laugh at me, Tom!" she burst out angrily; "I'm not a stupid. I know a great many things you don't."

"Oh, I dare say, Miss Spit-fire! I'd never be such a cross thing as you, making faces like that. Lucy doesn't do so. I like Lucy better than you; I wish Lucy was my sister."

"Then it's very wicked and cruel of you to wish so," said Maggie, starting up hurriedly from the floor and upsetting Tom's wonderful pagoda. Tom turned white with anger, but said nothing, and Maggie stood in dismay and terror while he walked away, and Lucy looked on mutely like a kitten pausing from its lapping.

"Oh, Tom," said Maggie, at last going halfway toward him, "I didn't mean to knock it down, indeed, I didn't."

But Tom took no notice of her, and thus the morning was made heavy to her, and Tom's persistent coldness to her all through their walk to Garum Firs spoiled the fresh air and sunshine for her. He called Lucy to look at the half-bird's nest without caring to show it to Maggie, and peeled a willow switch for Lucy and himself without offering one to Maggie. Lucy had said, "Maggie, shouldn't you like one?" but Tom was deaf.

Still the sight of the peacock spreading his tail on the wall just as they reached Garum Firs was enough to divert the mind temporarily from personal grievances. And this was only the beginning of beautiful sights at Garum Firs. All the farmyard life was wonderful there—bantams, speckled and top-knotted; Friesland hens with their feathers all turned the wrong way; guinea-fowls that flew and screamed and dropped their pretty spotted feathers; pouter-pigeons and a tame magpie; nay, a goat, and a wonderful brindled dog as large as a lion. Then there were white railings and white gates and glittering weather-cocks and garden walks paved with pebbles in beautiful patterns—nothing was quite

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

common at Garum Firs. As for the house, it was not less remarkable. It had a receding centre, and two wings with battlemented turrets and was covered with glittering white stucco.

Uncle Pullet had seen the expected party approaching and made haste to unchain the front door. Aunt Pullet, too, appeared, saying, "Stop the children, Bessy! Don't let them come up the doorsteps; Sally's bringing the old mat and the duster to rub their shoes." Mrs. Pullet's front door-mats were by no means intended to wipe shoes on, and Tom rebelled particularly against this shoe-wiping, which he always considered in the light of an indignity to his sex. He felt it as the beginning of the disagreeables incident to a visit to Aunt Pullet's. The next disagreeable was confined to his feminine companions: it was mounting the polished stairs, which were so glossy, that though Mrs. Tulliver ventured on no comment, she felt it was a mercy when she and the children were safe on the landing. While Tom waited downstairs, the interval seemed long, for he was seated in irksome constraint on the edge of a sofa directly opposite his Uncle Pullet, who regarded him with twinkling grey eyes and occasionally addressed him as "young sir."

The only alleviating circumstance in a tête-à-tête with Uncle Pullet was that he kept a variety of lozenges and peppermint drops about his person, and when at a loss for conversation, he filled up the void by proposing a mutual solace of this kind.

The appearance of the little girls suggested to Uncle Pullet the further solace of small sweet cakes, of which he also kept a stock, but the three children had no sooner got the tempting delicacy between their fingers than Aunt Pullet desired them to wait till the tray and the plates came, else they would make the floor "all over" crumbs. Lucy didn't

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

mind, for the cake was so pretty, she thought it was rather a pity to eat it, but Tom, watching his opportunity while the elders were talking, hastily stowed his in his mouth at two bites, and chewed it furtively. As for Maggie, in an unlucky movement she let hers fall and crushed it beneath her foot—which agitated her Aunt Pullet so much, that Maggie, in conscious disgrace, began to despair of hearing the musical snuff-box till it occurred to her to whisper to Lucy to ask for a tune. Lucy, who always did what she was desired to do, went up quietly to her uncle's knee, and blushing while she fingered her necklace said, "Will you please play us a tune, uncle?"

When the fairy tune actually began, for the first time Maggie quite forgot that she had a load on her mind, and her face wore a bright look of happiness which made her look pretty in spite of her brown skin. She sat immovable with her hands clasped, until the magic music ceased, when she jumped up and running toward Tom, put her arms around his neck, and said, "Oh, Tom, isn't it pretty?"

As Tom at that moment had his glass of cow-slip wine in his hand, she jerked him so as to make him spill half of it. He must have been an extreme milk-sop not to say angrily, "Look there, now!" which he did.

"Why don't you sit still, Maggie?" her mother said, peevishly.

"Little gells mustn't come to see me if they behave in that way," said Aunt Pullet.

"Why, you're too rough, Miss," said Uncle Pullet.

Poor Maggie sat down again with the music all chased out of her soul, and the seven small demons all in again.

Mrs. Tulliver, foreseeing nothing but misbehaviour while the children remained in the house, suggested that they might go and play in the garden, which invitation they

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

eagerly accepted, and remained out of doors until tea-time, when instead of the tea tray, Sally appeared and introduced an object so startling that both Mrs. Pullet and Mrs. Tulliver screamed, causing Uncle Pullet to swallow his lozenge, for the fifth time in his life—as he afterward noted. The startling object was no other than little Lucy, from her small feet to her bonnet crown, wet and discoloured with mud, holding out two tiny blackened hands and making a very piteous face.

When the children left the house, Tom, after tickling a fat toad in the area with a piece of string for some time, began to look round for some other sport.

“I say, Lucy,” he said, “I mean to go to the pond and look at the pike. You may go with me if you like,” said the young sultan.

“Oh, Tom, dare you?” said Lucy. “Aunt said we mustn’t go out of the garden.”

“Oh,” said Tom, “nobody’ll see us. Besides, I don’t care if they do—I’ll run off home.”

“But I couldn’t run,” said Lucy, who had never before been exposed to such severe temptation.

“Oh, never mind, they won’t be cross with you,” said Tom. “You say I took you.”

Tom walked along and Lucy trotted by his side, timidly enjoying the rare treat of doing something naughty. Maggie saw them leaving the garden and could not resist the impulse to follow. So she kept a few yards behind them, unobserved by Tom, who was presently absorbed in watching a water snake in the pond.

“Here, Lucy!” he said, “come here! take care! keep on the grass—don’t step where the cows have been.”

Lucy came carefully as she was bidden. Maggie had drawn nearer and nearer; at last she was close by Lucy, and

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

Tom, who had been aware of her approach, but would not notice her till he was obliged, turned round and said—“Now get away, Maggie; there’s no room for you on the grass here. Nobody asked you to come.”

Poor Maggie was tragic in her loneliness and passion, and with a fierce thrust of her small brown arms she pushed poor little pink and white Lucy into the cow-trodden mud. Then Tom could not restrain himself, and gave Maggie two smart slaps, as he ran to pick up Lucy, who lay crying helplessly. Maggie retreated to the roots of a tree a few yards off and looked on impenitently. Usually her repentance came quickly after one rash deed, but now Tom and Lucy had made her so miserable, she was glad to spoil their happiness.

“I shall tell mother, you know, Miss Mag,” said Tom, loudly and emphatically as soon as Lucy was ready to walk away. Lucy, meanwhile, was entirely absorbed by the spoiling of her pretty best clothes, and the discomfort of being wet and dirty, and it was in this sorry plight that she retreated with Tom toward Garum Firs, while Maggie sat on the roots of the tree and looked after them.

“Goodness gracious!” screamed Aunt Pullet, “keep her at the door, Sally! Don’t bring her off the oil cloth, whatever you do.”

“Why, she’s tumbled into some nasty mud,” said Mrs. Tulliver, anxiously examining the child’s clothes, as she felt herself responsible for Lucy while she was visiting at the Mill.

“If you please, ’um, it was Miss Maggie as pushed her in,” said Sally. “Master Tom’s been and said so, and they must ha’ been to the pond, for it’s only there they could ha’ got into such dirt.”

“There it is, Bessy,” said Mrs. Pullet, in a tone of pro-

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

phetic sadness; "it's your children—there's no knowing what they'll come to."

Mrs. Tulliver was mute, feeling herself a truly wretched mother. Meanwhile tea was to be brought in, and the two naughty children were to have theirs in an ignominious manner in the kitchen. Mrs. Tulliver went out to speak to them, and after some search, found Tom alone.

"Tom, you naughty boy, where did you leave your sister?" asked Mrs. Tulliver, in a distressed voice.

"Sitting under the tree, against the pond," said Tom indifferently.

"Then go and fetch her in this minute, you naughty boy. And how could you think o' going to the pond, and taking your sister where there was dirt?"

Tom hurried away to the pond, but presently returned with the news that Maggie was nowhere to be found.. This terrified everyone, until Tom suggested that she had probably gone home, which suggestion was seized as a comfort by his mother.

"Sister, for goodness sakes, let them put the horse in the carriage and take me home. We shall perhaps find her on the road. Lucy can't walk in her dirty clothes," she said, looking at that innocent victim who was wrapped up in a shawl, and sitting with naked feet on the sofa.

Aunt Pullet was quite willing to take the shortest means of restoring her premises to order and quiet, and it was not long before Mrs. Tulliver was in the chaise, looking anxiously at the most distant point before her. What the father would say if Maggie was lost, was a question that predominated over every other.

Meanwhile Maggie's intentions, as usual, were on a larger scale than Tom had imagined. Her resolution after he and Lucy had walked away, was not so simple as going home.

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

No! She would run away and go to the gypsies, and cruel Tom and the rest of her relations who found fault with her should never see her any more. Maggie had been so often told she was like a gypsy, and "half wild," that this was by no means a new idea to her. She had even once suggested to Tom that he should stain his face brown, and they should run away together; but Tom rejected the scheme with contempt, objecting that gypsies were thieves, and hardly got anything to eat, and had nothing to drive but a donkey. To-day, however, Maggie thought her misery had reached a pitch at which gypsydom was her only refuge, and she rose from her seat on the roots of the tree with the sense that this was a great crisis in her life, and resolved to run straight away till she came to Dunlow Common, where there would certainly be gypsies. She thought of her father as she ran along, but she reconciled herself to the idea of parting with him, by determining that she would secretly send him a letter by a small gypsy, without telling where she was and just let him know that she was well and happy and always loved him very much.

Maggie soon got out of breath with running, but by the time Tom got to the pond again she was three long fields away, on the edge of the lane leading to the highroad. For over an hour she wandered on through gates and fields, by hedgerows, until at a bend in the lane she actually saw a tent, with blue smoke rising before it. She even saw a tall figure by the column of smoke, doubtless the gypsy mother. It was astonishing to her that she did not feel more delighted. It was also startling to find the gypsies in a lane, for a mysterious illimitable Common had always made part of Maggie's picture of gypsy life. The tall figure, who proved to be a young woman with a baby on her arm, walked slowly to meet her. Maggie looked up in the new face rather

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

tremblingly, and was reassured by the thought that her Aunt Pullet and the rest were right when they called her a gypsy; for this face with the bright dark eyes and the long hair was really something like what she used to see in the glass before she cut her hair off.

"My little lady, where are you going to?" the gypsy said in a tone of coaxing deference.

It was delightful, and just what Maggie expected.

"Not any farther," she replied, feeling as if she were saying what she had rehearsed in a dream. "I'm come to stay with you, please."

"That's pretty; come, then. Why, what a nice little lady you are, to be sure," said the gypsy, taking her by the hand. Maggie thought her very agreeable, but wished she had not been so dirty.

There was quite a group around the fire. An old gypsy woman was seated on the ground nursing her knees, and occasionally poking a skewer into the kettle that sent forth an odorous steam. Two small shock-headed children were lying prone and resting on their elbows, and a placid donkey was bending his head over a tall girl, who was scratching his nose and indulging him with a bite of stolen hay. The slanting sunlight fell kindly upon them, and the scene was really very pretty and comfortable, Maggie thought, only she hoped they would soon set out the tea-cups. Everything would be quite charming when she had taught the gypsies to use a washing-basin, and to feel an interest in books. It was a little confusing, though, when they began to speak in a language which Maggie did not understand, while the tall girl, who was feeding the donkey, stared at her without offering any salutation! At last the old woman said:

"What! my pretty lady, are you come to stay with us? Sit ye down, and tell us where ye come from."

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

It was just like a story: Maggie liked to be called pretty lady and treated in this way. She sat down and said:

"I'm come from home because I'm unhappy, and I mean to be a gypsy. I'll live with you if you like, and I can teach you a great many things."

"Such a clever little lady," said the woman, "and such a pretty bonnet and frock," she added, taking off Maggie's bonnet and looking at it while she made an observation to the old woman, in the unknown language. The tall girl snatched the bonnet and put it on her own head hind-foremost with a grin; but Maggie was determined not to show any weakness on this subject.

"I don't want to wear a bonnet," she said. "I'd rather wear a red handkerchief, like yours. My hair was quite long till yesterday, when I cut it off; but I dare say it will grow again," she added apologetically, thinking it probable that gypsies had a strong prejudice in favour of long hair.

"Oh, what a nice little lady!—and rich, I'm sure," said the old woman. "Didn't you live in a beautiful house at home?"

"Yes, my home is pretty, and I'm very fond of the river, where we go fishing, but I'm often very unhappy. I should have liked to bring my books with me, but I came away in a hurry, you know. But I can tell you almost everything there is in them, and that will amuse you. And I can tell you something about geography, too—that's about the world we live in—very useful and interesting. Did you ever hear about Columbus?"

Maggie's eyes had begun to sparkle and her cheeks to flush—she was really beginning to instruct the gypsies, and gaining great influence over them. The gypsies themselves were not without amazement at this talk, though their atten-

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

tion was divided by the contents of Maggie's pocket, which had by this time been emptied without attracting her notice.

"Is that where you live, my little lady?" said the old woman, at the mention of Columbus.

"Oh, no!" said Maggie, with some pity; "Columbus was a very wonderful man who found out half the world, and they put chains on him and treated him very badly, you know; it's in my catechism of geography, but perhaps it's rather too long to tell before tea—I want my tea so!"

The last words burst from Maggie, in spite of herself, with a sudden drop from patronising instruction to simple peevishness.

"Why, she's hungry, poor little lady," said the younger woman. "Give her some of the cold vitual. You've been walking a good way, I'll be bound, my dear. Where's your home?"

"It's a good way off," said Maggie. "My father is Mr. Tulliver, but we mustn't let him know where I am, else he'd fetch me home again. Where does the queen of the gypsies live?"

"What! do you want to go to her, my little lady?" said the younger woman.

"No," said Maggie; "I'm only thinking that if she isn't a very good queen you might be glad when she died, and you could choose another. If I was a queen, I'd be kind to everybody."

"Here's a bit o' nice vitual," said the old woman, handing Maggie a lump of dry bread and a piece of cold bacon.

"Thank you," said Maggie, "but will you give me some bread and butter and tea instead? I don't like bacon."

"We've got no tea nor butter," said the old woman, with something like a scowl.

"Oh, a little bread and treacle would do," said Maggie.

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

"We han't got no treacle," said the old woman, crossly. Whereupon there ensued much incomprehensible chattering between the two women in their unknown tongue. Maggie felt very lonely and quite sure she should begin to cry before long, but the tears were checked by a new terror, when two men came up. One carried a bag, which he flung down, while a black cur ran barking up to Maggie, and threw her into a tremor that only found a new cause in the curses with which the younger man called the dog off.

Maggie felt that it was impossible she should ever be queen of these people or ever communicate to them amusing and useful knowledge.

Both the men seemed to be inquiring about her in the unknown tongue. At last, the younger woman said in her previous deferential coaxing tone:

"This nice little lady has come to live with us; aren't you glad?"

"Ay, very glad," said the younger man, who sat looking at Maggie's silver thimble and other small matters that had been taken from her pocket. He returned them all except the thimble to the younger woman with some observation, and she immediately restored them to Maggie's pocket, while the men began to attack the contents of the kettle—a stew of meat and potatoes—which had been turned out into a yellow platter.

"Here, my dear, try if you can eat a bit o' this," said the younger woman, handing some of the stew on a brown dish with an iron spoon to Maggie, who, remembering that the old woman had seemed angry with her for not liking the bread and bacon, dared not refuse the stew, though fear had chased away her appetite. If her father would but come by in the gig and take her up! Or even if Jack the Giantkiller, or Mr. Greatheart, or St. George, who slew the dragon on

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

the half-pennies, would happen to pass that way! But Maggie thought with a sinking heart that these heroes were never seen in the neighbourhood of St. Ogg's; nothing very wonderful ever came there.

Her ideas about the gypsies had undergone a rapid modification in the last five minutes. From having considered them very respectful companions, she had begun to think that they meant perhaps to kill her as soon as it was dark, and cut up her body for gradual cooking; the suspicion crossed her that the fierce-eyed old man was in fact the devil, who might at any moment turn either into the grinning blacksmith or a fiery-eyed monster with dragon's wings. It was no use trying to eat the stew, and the young woman, observing that she did not even take a spoonful of it, said: "What! you don't like the smell of it, my dear, try a bit, come."

"No, thank you," said Maggie, summoning all her force for a desperate effort, and trying to smile in a friendly way. "I haven't time, I think, it seems getting darker. I think I must go home now, and come again another day, and then I could bring you a basket with some jam tarts and things."

Maggie rose as she threw out this illusory prospect, devoutly hoping that Apollyon was gullible, but her hopes sank when the old woman said, "Stop a bit; we'll take you home all safe, when we've done supper; you shall ride home like a lady."

Maggie sat down again, with little faith in his promise, but presently the younger man led the donkey forward, asking, "What's the name o' the place where you live?"

"Dorlcote Mill is my home," said Maggie, eagerly.

"What! a big mill a little way this side o' St. Ogg's?"

"Yes," said Maggie. "Is it far off? I think I should like to walk there, if you please."

"No, no, it'll be getting dark; we must make haste. And

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

the donkey'll carry you as nice as can be, you'll see." As he spoke he set Maggie on the donkey, tremulous with the hope that she was really going home.

"Here's your pretty bonnet," said the younger woman, putting that recently despised but now welcome article of costume on Maggie's head; "and you'll say we've been very good to you, won't you? and what a nice little lady we said you was?"

"Oh, yes, thank you," said Maggie; "I'm very much obliged to you. But I wish you'd go with me, too."

"Ah, you're fondest o' *me*, aren't you?" said the woman. "But I can't go, you'll go too fast for me."

It now appeared that the man also was to be seated on the donkey, holding Maggie before him; and she was as incapable of remonstrating against this arrangement as the donkey himself, though no nightmare had ever seemed to her more horrible. Poor Maggie, in this entirely natural ride on a short-paced donkey with a gypsy behind her, who considered that he was earning half a crown, was more terrified than she had ever been before in her life.

At last—oh, sight of joy! There was a finger-post at a corner which read, "To St. Ogg's, 2 miles." The gypsy really meant to take her home. He was probably a good man, after all, and might have been rather hurt at the thought that she didn't like coming with him alone. The idea became stronger as she felt more and more certain that she knew the road quite well, and she was considering how she might efface the impression of her cowardice, when she caught sight of someone coming on a white-faced horse.

"Oh, stop, stop!" she cried out. "There's my father! Oh, father, father!"

The sudden joy was almost painful, and before her father

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

reached her, she was sobbing. Great was Mr. Tulliver's wonder, for he had made a round from Basset, and had not yet been home.

"Why, what's the meaning o' this?" he said, checking his horse, while Maggie slipped from the donkey and ran to her father's stirrup.

"The little miss lost herself, I reckon," said the gypsy. "She'd come to our tent at the far end o' Dunlow Lane, and I was bringing her where she said her home was. It's a good way to come arter being on the tramp all day."

"Oh, yes, father, he's been very good to bring me home," said Maggie—"a very kind, good man!"

"Here, then, my man," said Mr. Tulliver, taking out five shillings. "It's the best day's work *you* ever did. I couldn't afford to lose the little wench; here, lift her up before me."

"Why, Maggie, how's this, how's this?" he said, as they rode along, while she laid her head against her father and sobbed. "How came you to be rambling about and lose yourself?"

"Oh, father," sobbed Maggie; "I ran away because I was so unhappy; Tom was so angry with me. I couldn't bear it."

"Pooh, pooh," said Mr. Tulliver, soothingly; "you mustn't think o' running away from father. What 'ud father do without his little wench?"

"Oh, no, I never will again, father—never."

Mr. Tulliver spoke his mind very strongly when he reached home that evening; and the effect was seen in the remarkable fact that Maggie never heard one reproach from her mother, or one taunt from Tom, about this foolish business of her running away to the gypsies. Maggie was rather awe-stricken by this unusual treatment, and sometimes

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

thought that her conduct had been too wicked to be alluded to.

Very soon after this episode Tom was placed under the distinguished care of the Reverend Walter Stelling, and his sufferings during the first quarter were severe. He had not been at King's Lorton for a fortnight before it was evident to him that life, complicated not only with the Latin grammar, but with a new standard of English pronunciation, was a very difficult business, made all the more obscure by a thick mist of bashfulness, which made the difficulty of enunciating a monosyllable in reply to Mr. or Mrs. Stelling so great, that he even dreaded to be asked at table whether he would have more pudding. He was the solitary pupil, and Mr. Stelling was determined that he should make rapid progress in a short time. Not that Mr. Stelling was an unkind man; quite the contrary. He was jocose with Tom at table, and corrected his provincialisms and his deportment in the most playful manner; but poor Tom was only the more cowed and confused by this, for he had never been used to jokes at all like Mr. Stelling's, and for the first time in his life he had a painful sense that he was all wrong somehow.

When Mr. Stelling said, as the roast-beef was being uncovered, "Now, Tulliver, which would you rather decline, roast beef or the Latin for it?" Tom, to whom in his coolest moments a pun would have been a hard nut, was thrown into a state of embarrassed alarm that made everything dim to him except the feeling that he would rather not have anything to do with Latin. Of course he answered, "roast beef," whereupon there followed much laughter and some practical joking with the plates, from which Tom gathered that he had in some mysterious way refused beef, and, in fact, made himself appear "a silly."

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

He was soon set down as a thoroughly stupid lad; for though by hard labour he could get particular declensions into his brain, anything so abstract as the relation between cases and terminations could by no means get such a lodgment there as to enable him to recognise a chance genitive or dative. This struck Mr. Stelling as something more than natural stupidity; he suspected obstinacy, or, at any rate, indifference; and lectured Tom severely on his want of application. Under this vigorous treatment, Tom became more like a girl than he had ever been in his life before. He was too clear-sighted not to be aware that Mr. Stelling's standard of things was quite different than that of the people he had been living amongst, and that, brought in contact with it, he appeared uncouth and stupid, and his pride got into an uneasy condition which quite nullified his boyish self-satisfaction. He was of a very firm, not to say obstinate disposition, and if it had occurred to him that he could show some quickness at his lessons by standing on one leg for an inconvenient length of time, or rapping his head moderately against the wall, or any voluntary action of that sort, he would certainly have tried it. But he had never heard that these measures would brighten the understanding or strengthen the memory; and he was not given to hypothesis and experiment. It did occur to him that he could perhaps get some help by praying for it, and so one day when he had broken down, for the fifth time, in the supines of the third conjugation, and Mr. Stelling had lectured him very seriously, Tom more miserable than usual, determined to try his sole resource. That evening, after his usual form of prayer for his parents and "little sister" (he had begun to pray for Maggie when she was a baby), and that he might be able always to keep God's commandments, he added, in the same low whisper, "and

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

please to make me always remember my Latin." He paused a little to consider how he should pray about Euclid—whether he should ask to see what it meant, or whether there was any other mental state which would be more applicable to the case. But at last he added—"And make Mr. Stelling say I sha'n't do Euclid any more. Amen."

The fact that he got through his supines without mistake the next day encouraged him to persevere in this appendix to his prayers. But his faith broke down under the apparent absence of all help when he got into the irregular verbs.

The dreary, lonesome weeks dragged along, but finally the half year was broken by a visit from Maggie. Mr. Tulliver, coming for the first time to see Tom, brought with him, at Mrs. Stelling's invitation, the little girl to stay with her brother.

"Well, my lad," said Mr. Tulliver. "You look rarely! School agrees with you."

Tom wished he had looked rather ill.

"I don't think I *am* well, father," he said; "I wish you'd ask Mr. Stelling not to let me do Euclid; it brings on the toothache, I think."

(The toothache was the only malady to which Tom had ever been subject.)

"Euclid, my lad—why, what's that?" said Mr. Tulliver.

"Oh, I don't know; it's definitions, and axioms, and triangles, and things. It's a book I've got to learn in—there's no sense in it."

"Go, go!" said Mr. Tulliver, reprovingly. "You mustn't say so. You must learn what your master tells you. He knows what's right for you to learn."

"*I'll* help you now, Tom," said Maggie, with a little air of patronising consolation.

"*You* help me, you silly little thing!" said Tom, in such

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

high spirits at this announcement that he quite enjoyed the idea of confounding Maggie by showing her a page of Euclid. "I should like to see you doing one of *my* lessons! Why, I learn Latin, too!"

"I know what Latin is very well," said Maggie, confidently. "Latin's a language. There are Latin words in the dictionary. There's bonus, a gift."

"Now you're just wrong there, Miss Maggie!" said Tom, secretly astonished. "You think you're very wise! But bonus means 'good,' as it happens—bonus, bona, bonum."

"Well, that's no reason why it shouldn't mean 'gift,'" said Maggie, stoutly; "almost every word means several things. There's 'lawn'—it means the grass-plot, as well as the stuff pocket handkerchiefs are made of."

"Well done, little 'un," said Mr. Tulliver, laughing; while Tom felt rather disgusted with Maggie's knowingness, though beyond measure cheerful at the thought that she was going to stay with him. Mrs. Stelling had not mentioned a longer time than a week for Maggie's stay; but Mr. Stelling, who took her between his knees and asked her where she stole her dark eyes from, insisted that she must stay a fortnight, and Mr. Tulliver was quite proud to leave her where she would have an opportunity of showing her cleverness to appreciating strangers.

"Now then, come with me into the study, Maggie," said Tom, as their father drove away. "What do you shake and toss your head now for, you silly?" he continued; for though her hair was now brushed smoothly behind her ears, she seemed still in imagination to be tossing it out of her eyes.

"Oh, I can't help it," said Maggie, impatiently. "Don't tease me, Tom. Oh, what books!" she exclaimed, as she saw the bookcases in the study. "How I should like to have as many books as that!"

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

"Why, you couldn't read one of 'em," said Tom, triumphantly. "They're all Latin."

"No, they aren't," said Maggie. "I can read the back of this—'History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.'"

"Well, what does that mean? *You* don't know," said Tom, wagging his head.

"But I could soon find out," said Maggie, scornfully.

"Why, how?"

"I should look inside, and see what it was about."

"You'd better not, Miss Maggie," said Tom, seeing her hand on the volume. "Mr. Stelling lets nobody touch his books without leave, and I shall catch it, if you take it out."

"Oh, very well. Let me see all your books, then," said Maggie, turning to throw her arms round Tom's neck, and rub his cheek with her small round nose.

Tom, in the gladness of his heart at having dear old Maggie to dispute with and crow over again, seized her round the waist, and began to jump with more and more vigour, till Maggie's hair flew from behind her ears, and twirled about like an animated mop. But the revolutions round the table became more and more irregular in their sweep, till at last reaching Mr. Stelling's reading-stand, they sent it thundering down with its heavy lexicons to the floor.

"Oh, I say, Maggie," said Tom, "we must keep quiet here, you know. If we break anything, Mrs. Stelling 'll make us cry peccavi."

"What's that?" said Maggie.

"Oh, it's the Latin for a good scolding," said Tom, not without some pride in his knowledge.

"Is she a cross woman?" said Maggie.

"I believe you!" said Tom, with an emphatic nod.

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

"I think all women are crosser than men," assented Maggie.

"Well, you'll be a woman some day," said Tom, "so *you* needn't talk."

"But I shall be a clever woman," said Maggie, with a toss. "You won't hate me, will you, Tom?"

"Oh, bother! never mind! Come, it's time for me to learn my lessons. See here, what I've got to do," said Tom, showing her his theorem, while she pushed her hair behind her ears, and prepared herself to prove her capability of helping him with Euclid. She began to read with full confidence in her own powers, but presently her face flushed with irritation. She must confess her incompetency, and she was not fond of humiliation.

"It's nonsense!" she said, "and very ugly stuff; nobody need want to make it out."

"Ah, there now, Miss Maggie!" said Tom; "you see you're not so clever as you thought you were."

"Oh," said Maggie, pouting, "I dare say I could make it out if I'd learned what goes before, as you have."

"But that's what you just couldn't, Miss Wisdom," said Tom. "For it's all the harder when you know what goes before; for then you've got to say what definition 3 is, and what axiom V. is. But get along with you now; I must go on with this. Here's the Latin grammar. See what you can make of that."

Maggie found the Latin grammar quite soothing after her mathematical mortification; for she delighted in new words and quickly found there was an English key at the end, which would make her very wise about Latin, at slight expense. She presently made up her mind to skip the rules in the syntax, the examples became so absorbing. These mysterious sentences, snatched from an unknown context,

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

gave boundless scope to her imagination, and were all the more fascinating because they were in a peculiar tongue which she could learn to interpret. It was really very interesting—the Latin grammar that Tom had said no girls could learn, and she was quite lost in its attractions, when Tom called out:

“Now, then, Magsie, give us the grammar!”

“Oh, Tom,” she exclaimed, “it’s such a pretty book! It’s much prettier than the dictionary. I could learn Latin very soon. I don’t think it’s at all hard.”

“Oh, I know what you’ve been doing,” said Tom; “you’ve been reading the English at the end. Any donkey can do that.”

Tom seized the book, and opened it with a business-like air, as much as to say that he had a lesson to learn which no donkeys would find themselves equal to. Maggie, rather piqued, turned to the bookcases to amuse herself with puzzling out the titles.

Presently Tom called to her: “Here, Magsie, come and hear if I can say this. Stand at that end of the table, where Mr. Stelling sits when he hears me.”

Maggie obeyed, took the open book and helped and prompted to the full extent of her ability, until they were fetched to spend the rest of the evening in the drawing-room. From first to last it was a very happy fortnight to Maggie. She was allowed to be in the study while Tom had his lessons, and in her various readings got very deep into the examples of the Latin grammar. The astronomer who hated women caused her so much puzzling speculation that she one day asked Mr. Stelling if all astronomers hated women, or whether it was only this particular astronomer. But forestalling his answer, she said:

“I suppose it’s all astronomers; because, you know, they

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

live up in high towers, and if the women came there, they might talk and hinder them from looking at the stars."

Mr. Stelling liked her prattle immensely, and they were on the best terms. She told Tom she knew she could do Euclid, for she had looked into it again, and she saw what A B C meant; they were the names of the lines.

"I'm sure you couldn't do it, now," said Tom; "and I'll just ask Mr. Stelling if you could."

"I don't mind," said the conceited little minx, "I'll ask him myself."

"Mr. Stelling," she said, "couldn't I do Euclid and all Tom's lessons if you were to teach me instead of him?"

"No, you couldn't," said Tom, indignantly. "Girls can't do Euclid, can they, sir?"

"They can pick up a little of everything, I dare say," said Mr. Stelling, "but they couldn't go far into anything. They're quick and shallow."

Tom, delighted with this verdict, telegraphed his triumph by wagging his head at Maggie behind Mr. Stelling's chair. As for Maggie, she had hardly even been so mortified. She had been so proud to be called "quick" all her little life and now it appeared that this quickness was the brand of inferiority. It would have been better to have been slow, like Tom.

"Ha, ha! Miss Maggie!" said Tom, when they were alone; "you see it's not such a fine thing to be quick. You'll never go far into anything you know."

And Maggie was so oppressed by this dreadful destiny that she had no spirit for a retort.

But when this small apparatus of shallow quickness was fetched away in the gig, Tom missed her grievously. But the dreary half-year finally came to an end. How glad

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

Tom was to see the last yellow leaves fluttering before the cold wind! The first December snow seemed to him far livelier than the August sunshine; and that he might make himself the surer about the flight of the days that were carrying him homeward, he stuck twenty-one sticks in the garden, when he was three weeks from the holidays and pulled one up every day.

But it was worth purchasing, even at the heavy price of the Latin grammar—the happiness of seeing the bright light in the parlour at home, the happiness of passing from the cold air to the warmth and the kisses and the smiles of that familiar hearth and entering at once upon the joys of the holiday season.

Snow lay on the croft and river bank; it lay on every sloping roof, making the dark red gables stand out with a new depth of colour; it weighed heavily on the laurels and fir trees; it clothed the rough turnip field with whiteness, and made the sheep look like dark blotches; the gates were all blocked up with the sloping drifts; there was no sound nor motion in anything but the dark flowing river. But old Christmas smiled as he laid this spell on the outdoor world, for he meant to light up home with new brightness, to prepare a sweet imprisonment that would strengthen the fellowship of kindred, and make the sunshine of familiar human faces as welcome as the hidden day star.

And yet this Christmas day, in spite of Tom's fresh delight in home, was not quite so happy as it had always been before. The red berries were just as abundant on the holly, and he and Maggie had dressed all the windows and mantelpieces and picture frames on Christmas eve with as much taste as ever. There had been singing under the windows after midnight—supernatural singing, Maggie always felt, in spite of Tom's contemptuous insistence that the singers

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

were old Patch, the parish clerk, and the rest of the church choir ; she trembled with awe when their carolling broke in on her dreams, and the image of men was always thrust away by the vision of angels resting on the parted cloud. Then there was the smell of hot toast and ale from the kitchen at the breakfast hour ; the favourite anthem, the green boughs, and the short sermon gave the appropriate festal character to the church going ; and Aunt and Uncle Moss, with all their seven children, were looking like so many reflectors of the bright parlour fire when the churchgoers came back, stamping the snow from their feet. The plum-pudding was of the same handsome roundness as ever, the dessert was as splendid as ever, in all these things Christmas was as it had always been ; it was only distinguished, if by anything, by superior sliding and snowballs.

Christmas was cheery, but not so Mr. Tulliver. He was irate and defiant because of the actions of one Mr. Pivart, who, having lands higher up the river, was taking measures for their irrigation, which were bound to be an infringement on Mr. Tulliver's legitimate share of water power. Lawyer Wakem, who was Mr. Pivart's lawyer, to Mr. Tulliver's certain knowledge was at the bottom of Pivart's irrigation ; it was unquestionably Wakem who had caused Mr. Tulliver to lose the suit about the right of road and the bridge that made a thoroughfare of his land. And as an extra touch of bitterness, the injured miller had recently, through the necessity of borrowing five hundred pounds, been obliged to carry a little business to Wakem's office on his own account. For all these reasons Mr. Tulliver's unpleasant opinion of Lawyer Wakem was as exaggerated as it was intense.

"Father," said Tom, one evening near the end of the holidays, "Uncle Glegg says Lawyer Wakem is going to

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

send his son to Mr. Stelling. You won't like me to go to school with Wakem's son, shall you?"

"It's no matter for that, my boy," said Mr. Tulliver; "don't you learn anything bad of him, that's all. The lad's a poor deformed creatur, and I think there isn't much of his father in him. It's a sign Wakem thinks high of Mr. Stelling, as he sends his son to him, and Wakem knows meal from bran."

Mr. Tulliver in his heart was rather proud of the fact that his son was to have the same advantages as Wakem's; but Tom was not at all easy on the point. It would have been much clearer if the lawyer's son had not been deformed, for then Tom would have had the prospect of pitching into him with all that freedom which is derived from a high moral sanction.

It was a cold wet January day on which Tom went back to school.

"Well, Tulliver, we are glad to see you again," said Mr. Stelling, heartily. "Come into the study till dinner. You'll find a bright fire there and a new companion."

"Here is the new pupil for you to shake hands with, Tulliver," continued Mr. Stelling, on entering the study—"Master Philip Wakem. I shall leave you to make acquaintance by yourselves. You already know something of each other, I imagine; for you are neighbours at home."

Tom looked confused and awkward, while Philip rose and glanced at him timidly. They remained without speaking, while Tom went to the fire and warmed himself, casting furtive glances at Philip, who seemed to be drawing on a piece of paper he had before him. As he drew he was thinking what he could say to Tom, and trying to overcome his own repugnance to making the first advances. Tom looked often and longer at Philip's face, and it was really

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

not a disagreeable face; though very old-looking, Tom thought, a melancholy boy's face; the brown hair round it curled at the ends like a girl's; Tom thought that truly pitiable. This Wakem was a pale, puny fellow, and it was quite clear he would not be able to play at anything worth speaking of; but he handled his pencil in an enviable manner. What was he drawing? Tom was quite warm now, and wanted something new to be going forward. It was certainly more agreeable to have an ill-natured humpback as a companion than to stand looking out of the study window at the rain in solitude; something would happen now every day—"a quarrel or something," Tom thought. He suddenly walked across the hearth and looked over Philip's paper.

"Why, that's a donkey with panniers, and a spaniel, and partridges in the corn!" he exclaimed, his tongue being completely loosed by surprise and admiration. "Oh, my buttons! I wonder if I shall learn to make dogs and donkeys!"

"Oh, you can do them without learning," said Philip; "I never learned drawing. It's very easy. You've only to look well at things and draw them over and over again. What you do wrong once, you can alter the next time."

"But haven't you been taught anything?" asked Tom. "I thought you'd been to school a long while."

"Yes," said Philip, smiling; "I've been taught Latin and Greek and mathematics and writing and such things."

"Oh, but I say, you don't like Latin, do you?" said Tom, lowering his voice confidentially.

"Pretty well," said Philip.

"Ah, but perhaps you haven't got into the *propria quae maribus*," said Tom, nodding his head as much as to say that was the test; it was easy talking till you came to that.

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

Philip felt some bitter complacency in the stupidity of this well-made, active-looking boy; but made polite by his own extreme sensitiveness as well as by his desire to conciliate, he checked his inclination to laugh and said quietly: "I've done with the grammar; I don't learn that any more."

"Then you won't have the same lessons as I shall?" said Tom, with a sense of disappointment.

"No, but I dare say I can help you. I shall be very glad to, if I can."

Tom did not say "thank you," for he was quite absorbed in the thought that Wakem's son did not seem so spiteful a fellow as might have been expected.

"I say," he said presently, "do you love your father?"

"Yes," said Philip, colouring deeply; "don't you love yours?"

"Oh, yes—I only wanted to know," said Tom, rather ashamed of himself, now he saw Philip colouring and looking uncomfortable.

"Shall you learn drawing now?" he said, by way of changing the subject.

"No," said Philip. "My father wishes me to give all my time to other things now."

"What! Latin and Euclid, and those things?" said Tom.

"Yes," said Philip, who had left off using his pencil, and was resting his head on one hand while Tom was leaning forward on both elbows, and looking with increasing admiration at the dog and the donkey.

"I can't think why anybody should learn Latin," said Tom. "It's no good."

"It's a part of the education of a gentleman," said Philip. "All gentlemen learn the same things. I don't mind, for

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

I can remember things easily and there are some lessons I'm very fond of. I'm very fond of everything about the Greeks. I should like to have been a Greek and fought the Persians, and then have come home and written like Socrates, and have died a grand death."

"Why, were the Greeks great fighters?" said Tom, who saw a vista in this direction. "Is there anything like David and Goliath and Samson in the Greek history?"

"Oh, there are very fine stories of that sort about the Greeks—about the heroes of early times who killed the wild beasts as Samson did. And in the *Odyssey*—that's a beautiful poem—there's a more wonderful giant than Goliath—Polyphemus, who had only one eye in the middle of his forehead; and Ulysses, a little fellow, but very wise and cunning, got a red-hot pine tree and stuck it into this one eye, and made him roar like a thousand bulls."

"Oh, what fun!" said Tom, jumping up and stamping first with one leg and then the other. "I say, can you tell a good many fighting stories?"

"Oh, yes," said Philip; "besides the Greek stories, I can tell about William Wallace and Robert Bruce and James Douglas—I know no end."

"You're older than I am, aren't you?" said Tom.

"Why, how old are you? I'm fifteen."

"I'm only going on fourteen," said Tom. "But I thrashed all the fellows at Jacob's—that's where I was before I came here—and I beat 'em all at bandy and climbing. And I wish Mr. Stelling would let us go fishing; I could show you how to fish. You could fish, couldn't you? It's only standing, and sitting still, you know."

Tom, in his turn, wished to make the balance dip in his favour. Philip winced under this allusion to his unfitness for active sports, and he answered almost peevishly:

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

"I can't bear fishing. I think people look like fools sitting watching a line hour after hour, or else throwing and throwing and catching nothing."

"Ah, but you wouldn't say they looked like fools when they landed a big pike, I can tell you," said Tom, who had never caught anything that was "big" in his life, but whose imagination was on the stretch with indignant zeal for the honour of sport. Wakem's son, it was plain, had his disagreeable points, and must be kept in due check. Happily for the harmony of this first interview, they were now called to dinner, and Philip was not allowed to develop farther his unsound views on the subject of fishing.

The alternations of feeling in that first dialogue between Tom and Philip continued to mark their intercourse even after many weeks of schoolboy intimacy. Tom never quite lost the feeling that Philip, being the son of a "rascal," was his natural enemy; but then it was impossible not to like Philip's company when he was in a good humour.

In many ways the thumb-screw on Tom was a little relaxed during this second half-year. Having Philip to help him, he was able to make some show of having applied his mind, without being cross-examined into a betrayal that his mind had been entirely neutral in the matter. He thought school much more bearable under this modification of circumstances; and he went on contentedly enough, picking up a promiscuous education chiefly from things that were not intended as education at all.

Nevertheless, there was a visible improvement in his bearing, for which credit was due to Mr. Poulter, an old Peninsular soldier, who was employed to drill Tom. The drilling-lessons were always protracted by episodes of war-like narrative, much more interesting to Tom than Philip's stories out of the *Iliad*; for there were no cannon in the

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

Iliad, and, besides, Tom had felt some disgust on learning that Hector and Achilles might possibly never have existed. But the Duke of Wellington was really alive, and Bony had not been long dead; therefore Mr. Poulter's reminiscences of the Peninsular War were removed from all suspicion of being mythical.

"Mr. Poulter," Tom would say, at any allusion to the sword, "I wish you'd bring your sword and do the sword-exercises!"

For a long while Mr. Poulter only shook his head in a significant manner at this request, but one afternoon, when a sudden shower had detained him twenty minutes longer than usual, the sword was brought—just for Tom to look at.

"And this is the real sword you fought with in all the battles, Mr. Poulter?" said Tom, handling the hilt. "Has it ever cut a Frenchman's head off?"

"Head off? Ah! and would, if he'd had three heads."

"But you had a gun and a bayonet beside?" said Tom. "I should like a gun and bayonet best, because you could shoot 'em first and spear 'em after."

"Ah, but the sword's the thing when you come to close fighting," said Mr. Poulter, involuntarily falling in with Tom's enthusiasm, and drawing the sword so suddenly that Tom leapt back with much agility and considerable fright, which he concealed by saying hastily:

"Oh, but, Mr. Poulter, if you are going to do the exercises, let me go and call Philip. He knows a great deal about fighting, and how they used to use bows and arrows and battle-axes."

"Let him come then," said Mr. Poulter, drawing himself up, while he gave a little preliminary play to his wrist.

Tom ran in to Philip, who was at the piano picking out tunes and singing them. He was supremely happy, sending

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

forth with all his might impromptu syllables to a tune which had hit his fancy.

"Come, Philip," said Tom, bursting in; "don't stay roaring, 'la, la' there. Come and see old Poulter do his sword exercise in the carriage house!"

The jar of this interruption, the discord of Tom's tone coming across the notes to which Philip was vibrating in soul and body, would have been enough to unhinge his temper, even if there had been no question of Poulter, the drilling master.

He shuddered visibly, then turning red, said with violent passion:

"Get away, you lumbering idiot! Don't come bellowing at me; you're not fit to speak to anything but a cart-horse!"

"I'm fit to speak to something better than you, you poor-spirited imp!" said Tom, lighting up immediately at Philip's fire. "You know I won't hit you, because you're no better than a girl. But I'm an honest man's son, and your father's a rogue; everybody says so!"

Tom flung out of the room and slammed the door after him, which was an offence only to be wiped out by twenty lines of Virgil. Mrs. Stelling descending from her room, in double wonder at the noise and the cessation of Philip's music, found him sitting in a heap, and crying bitterly.

"What's the matter, Wakem? What was that noise about? Who slammed the door?"

Philip looked up, and hastily dried his eyes. "It was Tulliver who came in—to ask me to go out with him."

"And what are you in trouble about?" said Mrs. Stelling.

"My toothache came on and made me hysterical again," Philip explained. This had been the fact once, and he was glad of the inspiration to excuse his crying. He had to

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

accept eau-de-Cologne and to refuse creosote in consequence; but that was easy.

Meanwhile Tom had returned to the carriage-house, where he found Mr. Poulter entirely absorbed in the cut and thrust—that solemn one, two, three, four; and Tom admired the performance from as great a distance as possible. It was not until Mr. Poulter paused and wiped the perspiration from his forehead, that Tom felt the full charm of the exercise, and wished it to be repeated.

"Mr. Poulter," said Tom, when the sword was being finally sheathed, "I wish you'd lend me your sword a little while. I'd give you my five-shilling piece if you'd let me keep the sword a week. Look here!" reaching out the attractively large round of silver. The young dog calculated the effect as well as if he had been a philosopher.

Mr. Poulter demurred long enough to feel that he had acted with scrupulous conscientiousness, when he pocketed the crown piece and agreed to Tom's demand. So Tom carried off the sword in triumph, mixed with a dread that he might encounter Mr. or Mrs. Stelling—to his bedroom, where he hid it in the closet behind some hanging clothes.

The breach between Tom and Philip was not readily mended. Tom had blundered on Philip's tenderest point, and had caused him as much acute pain as if he had studied the means with the most envenomed spite. Tom saw no reason why they should not make up this quarrel as they had done many others, by behaving as if nothing had happened; for though he had never before *said* to Philip that his father was a rogue, this idea had so habitually been his feeling that the mere utterance did not make such an epoch to him as it did to Philip. But perceiving that his advances were not met, he relapsed into his least favourable disposition toward Philip. They were only so far civil to each other as was

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

necessary to prevent their state of feud from being observed by Mr. Stelling, who would have “put down” such nonsense with great vigour.

When Maggie came, however, she could not help looking with interest at the new school-fellow, although he was the son of that wicked Lawyer Wakem, who made her father so angry. Tom some weeks ago had sent her word that Philip knew no end of stories, and she was convinced that he must be very clever; she hoped he would think her rather clever, *too*, when she came to talk to him. Maggie, moreover, had a tenderness for deformed things, and was especially fond of petting objects that would think it very delightful to be petted by her.

“I think Philip Wakem seems a nice boy, Tom,” she said, when they went together into the garden. “He couldn’t choose his father, you know, and I’ve read of very bad men who had good sons. You like him, don’t you?”

“Oh, he’s a queer fellow,” said Tom, curtly, “and he’s as sulky as can be with me, because I told him his father was a rogue. And I’d a right to tell him so, for it was true; and he began it, with calling me names. Now you stop here by yourself, Magsie, will you? I’ve got something I want to do upstairs.”

“Can’t I go too?” said Maggie, who in this first day of meeting again loved Tom’s shadow.

“No, it’s something I’ll tell you about by and by,” said Tom, skipping away.

That afternoon when lesson time was over Tom led Maggie up to his room and locked the door. “I’ll tell you when to turn round,” he said. “You mustn’t squeal out, you know.”

“Oh, but if you frighten me, I shall,” said Maggie, beginning to look rather serious.

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

"You won't be frightened, you silly thing," said Tom.
"Go and hide your face, and mind you don't peek."

"Of course I shan't peek," said Maggie disdainfully; and burying her face in the pillow she was absorbed in thoughts of Philip, who was so clever, until Tom called out "Now, then, Magsie!"

When Maggie looked up, Tom presented a striking figure indeed; dissatisfied with the pacific aspect of his flaxen eyebrows, blue-grey eyes and round pink cheeks, he had used burnt cork and made himself a pair of black eyebrows which were matched by the blackness about the chin. He had wound a red handkerchief round his cloth cap to give the effect of a turban, and his red comforter across his breast as a scarf—an amount of red which, with the tremendous frown on his brow and the decision with which he grasped the sword, would suffice to convey some idea of his fierce and bloodthirsty disposition.

Maggie looked bewildered for a moment, and Tom enjoyed that moment keenly; but in the next she laughed, clapped her hands and said, "Oh, Tom, you've made yourself like Bluebeard at the show."

It was clear she had realised that the sword was not unsheathed; and Tom prepared for his master-stroke. Carefully he drew the sword from its sheath, and pointed it at Maggie.

"Oh, Tom, please don't!" exclaimed Maggie, shrinking into the corner; "I shall scream—I'm sure I shall! Oh, don't! I wish I'd never come upstairs!"

The corners of Tom's mouth showed an inclination to a smile of complacency that was immediately checked. Slowly he let down the scabbard on the floor lest it should make too much noise, and then said sternly:

"I'm the Duke of Wellington! March!" stamping for-

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

ward toward Maggie, who, trembling, got upon the bed as the only means of widening the space between them.

Tom, happy in the spectator of his military performances, proceeded to such an exhibition of the cut and thrust as would be expected of the Duke of Wellington.

"Tom, I will *not* bear it, I *will* scream," said Maggie; "you'll hurt yourself—you'll cut your head off!"

"One—two," said Tom, resolutely, though at "two" his wrist trembled a little. "Three" came more slowly, and with it the sword swung downward, and Maggie gave a loud shriek. The sword had fallen, with its edge on Tom's foot, and in a moment after he had fallen too. Maggie leaped from the bed, still shrieking, and immediately there was a rush of footsteps toward the room. Mr. Stelling, from his upstairs study, was the first to enter. He found both the children on the floor. Tom had fainted, and Maggie was shaking him by the collar of the jacket, screaming, with wild eyes. She thought he was dead, poor child! and yet she shook him, as if that would bring him back to life.

In another minute she was sobbing with joy because Tom had opened his eyes. She couldn't sorrow yet that he had hurt his foot; it seemed as if all happiness lay in his being alive.

Poor Tom bore his severe pain heroically, and was resolute in not "telling" of Mr. Poulter more than was unavoidable; the five shilling piece remained a secret even to Maggie. But there was a terrible dread weighing on his mind, which only Philip anticipated. It had been Philip's first thought when he heard of the accident—"Will Tulliver be lame? It will be very hard for him, if he is;" and Tom's hitherto unforgiven offences were washed out by that pity. Philip had only lived fourteen years, but those years

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

had most of them been steeped in the sense of a lot irremediably hard.

"The surgeon says you'll soon be all right again, Tulliver, did you know?" he said, rather timidly, as he stood for the first time by Tom's bed. "I've just asked Mr. Stelling, and he says you'll walk as well as ever again by and by."

Tom looked up with that momentary stopping of the breath which comes with a sudden joy; then he gave a long sigh and turned his blue-grey eyes straight on Philip's face, as he had not done for a fortnight or more.

"Good-bye, Tulliver," said Philip, putting out his small delicate hand, which Tom clasped immediately with his more substantial fingers.

"I say," said Tom, "ask Mr. Stelling to let you come and sit with me sometimes, till I get up again, Wakem; and tell me about Robert Bruce, you know."

After that Philip spent all his time out of school hours with Tom and Maggie. One day Philip and Maggie were in the study together while Tom's foot was being dressed. Philip was at his books and Maggie began to question him: "What are you reading about in Greek?"

"It's about Philoctetes, the lame man I was telling you of yesterday," he answered, resting his head on his hand, and looking as if he were not at all sorry to be interrupted. Presently, still leaning on his elbow and looking at her, he said, "Maggie, if you had had a brother like me, do you think you should have loved him as well as Tom?"

Maggie started a little on being roused from her reverie, and said, "What?" Philip repeated his question.

"Oh, yes, better," she answered, immediately. "No, not better; because I don't think I could love you better than Tom. But I should be so sorry for you."

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

Philip coloured and winced under her pity. Maggie, young as she was, felt her mistake.

"But you are so clever, Philip, and you can play and sing," she added, quickly. "I wish you were my brother. You would stay at home with me when Tom went out, and you would teach me everything, wouldn't you—Greek and everything?"

"But you'll go away soon, and go to school, Maggie," said Philip, "and then you'll forget all about me."

"Oh, no," said Maggie, shaking her head very seriously. "I never forget anything, and I think about everybody when I'm away from them."

"I'm very fond of you, Maggie; I shall never forget you," said Philip, "and when I'm very unhappy, I shall always think of you, and wish I had a sister with dark eyes, just like yours."

"Why do you like my eyes?" said Maggie, well pleased. She had never heard anyone but her father speak of her eyes as if they had merit.

"I don't know," said Philip; "they're not like any other eyes. They seem trying to speak kindly. I don't like other people to look at me much, but I like you to look at me, Maggie."

"Why, I think you are fonder of me than Tom is," said Maggie rather sorrowfully. Then wondering how she could convince Philip that she could like him just as well, although he was crooked, she said:

"Should you like me to kiss you, as I do Tom? I will, if you like."

"Yes, very much; nobody kisses me."

Maggie put her arm round his neck and kissed him quite earnestly.

"There now," she said, "I shall always remember you,

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

and kiss you when I see you again, if it's ever so long. But I'll go now, because I think the surgeon's done with Tom's foot."

When their father came the second time, Maggie said to him, "Oh, father, Philip Wakem is so good to Tom; he is such a clever boy, and I do love him. And you love him too, Tom, don't you? Say you love him," she added entreatingly.

Tom coloured a little as he looked at his father, and said: "I sha'n't be friends with him when I leave school, father; but we've made it up now, since my foot has been bad, and he's taught me to play at draughts, and I can beat him."

"Well, well," said Mr. Tulliver, "if he's good to you try to make him amends, and be good to him. But don't you be getting too thick with him, he's got his father's blood in him."

Mr. Tulliver's admonition alone might have failed to accomplish what the jarring natures of the two boys effected. In spite of Philip's new kindness, and Tom's answering regard in this time of his trouble, they never became close friends. When Maggie was gone, and when Tom began to walk about as usual, the friendly warmth that had been kindled by pity and gratitude died out by degrees, and left them in their old relation to each other. If boys and men are to be welded together in the glow of real feeling, they must be made of metal that will mix, else they inevitably fall asunder when the heat dies out.

So Tom went on even to the fifth half-year—till he was turned sixteen—at King's Lorton, while Maggie had been placed at Miss Firmiss's boarding school in the town of Laceham on the Floss, with Cousin Lucy for her companion. In her early letters to Tom she had always sent her love to Philip, and asked many questions about him, which were

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

answered by brief sentences that made her perceive they were no longer very good friends. This pained her, but when she reminded Tom that he ought always to love Philip for being so good to him when his foot was bad, he answered: "Well, 'tisn't my fault; I don't do anything to him." She hardly ever saw Philip during the remainder of their school life; in the mid-summer holidays he was always away at the seaside, and at Christmas she could only meet him at long intervals in the streets of St. Ogg's.

Then when their father was actually engaged in the long threatened lawsuit against Pivart, and Wakem as the agent of Pivart was acting against him, even Maggie felt, with some sadness, that they were not likely ever to have any intimacy with Philip again.

By the time Tom had reached his last quarter at King's Lorton the years had made striking changes in him. He was a tall youth now, carrying himself without the least awkwardness and speaking without more shyness than was a becoming symptom of blended diffidence and pride. Philip had already left school at the autumn quarter, and this change helped to give Tom the unsettled exultant feeling that usually belongs to the last months before leaving school. This quarter, too, there was some hope of his father's lawsuit being decided; that made the prospect of home more pleasurable. For Tom had no doubt that Pivart would be beaten.

He had not heard anything from home for some weeks—when to his great surprise, on the morning of a dark cold day near the end of November, he was told that his sister was in the drawing-room.

Maggie, too, was tall now, with braided and coiled hair; she was almost as tall as Tom, though she was only thirteen, and she really looked older than he did at that moment

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

Her young face had a strangely worn look as her eyes turned anxiously toward the door. When Tom entered she did not speak, but only went up to him, put her arms around his neck, and kissed him earnestly. He was used to various moods of hers, and felt no alarm at the unusual seriousness of her greeting.

"Why, how is it you've come so early this cold morning, Maggie? Did you come in the gig?" said Tom, as she backed toward the sofa, and drew him to her side.

"No, I came by the coach. I've walked from the turnpike."

"But how is it you're not at school? The holidays have not begun yet."

"Father wanted me at home," said Maggie, with a slight trembling of the lip. "I came home three or four days ago."

"Isn't my father well?" said Tom, rather anxiously.

"Not quite," said Maggie. "He's very unhappy, Tom. The lawsuit is ended, and I came to tell you because I thought it would be better for you to know it before you came home, and I didn't like only to send you a letter."

"My father hasn't lost?" said Tom, hastily, springing from the sofa, and standing before Maggie, with his hands suddenly thrust in his pockets.

"Yes, dear Tom," said Maggie, looking up at him with trembling.

Tom was silent a minute or two, with his eyes fixed on the floor. Then he said:

"My father will have to pay a good deal of money, then?"

"Yes," said Maggie, rather faintly.

"Well, it can't be helped," said Tom, bravely, not translating the loss of a large sum of money into any tangible re-

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

sults. "But my father's very much vexed, I dare say?" he added, looking at Maggie, and thinking that her agitated face was only part of her girlish way of taking things.

"Yes," said Maggie, again faintly. Then, urged to fuller speech by Tom's freedom from apprehension, she said loudly and rapidly, as if the words *would* burst from her: "Oh, Tom, he will lose the mill and the land and everything; he will have nothing left."

Tom's eyes flashed out one look of surprise at her, before he turned pale, and trembled visibly.

Anxiety about the future had never entered Tom's mind. He had never dreamed that his father would "fail"; that was a form of misfortune which he had always heard spoken of as a deep disgrace, and disgrace was an idea that he could not associate with any of his relations, least of all with his father.

Maggie was frightened at his silence. There was something else to tell him; something worse. She threw her arms around him at last, and Tom turned his cheek passively to meet her kisses, and there gathered a moisture in his eyes which he rubbed away with his hand. The action seemed to rouse him, for he shook himself and said: "I shall go home with you, Maggie. Didn't my father say I was to go?"

"No, Tom, father didn't wish it," said Maggie, "but mother wants you to come—poor mother—she cries so! Oh, Tom, it's very dreadful at home."

Maggie's lips grew whiter, and she began to tremble almost as Tom had done; when she spoke it was hardly above a whisper.

"And—and—poor father——"

Maggie could not utter it, but the suspense was intoler-

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

able to Tom. A vague idea of going to prison, as the consequence of debt, was the shape his fears had begun to take.

"Where's my father?" he said impatiently. "Tell me, Maggie."

"He's at home," said Maggie, but she added after a pause, "not himself—he fell off his horse. He's known nobody but me ever since—he seems to have lost his senses. Oh, father, father—"

With these last words Maggie's sobs burst forth violently. Tom felt that pressure of the heart which forbids tears; he had no distinct vision of their troubles, as Maggie had, who had been at home; he only felt the crushing weight of what seemed unmitigated misfortune. He tightened his arm almost convulsively around Maggie, but she soon checked herself abruptly; a single thought had acted on her like a startling sound.

"We must set out now, Tom—we must not stay—father will miss me. We must be at the turnpike at ten to meet the coach." She said this with hasty decision, rubbing her eyes, and rising to seize her bonnet. Tom at once felt the same impulse, and rose, too. "Wait a minute, Maggie," he said. "I must speak to Mr. Stelling, and then we'll go."

He thought he must go to the study, but on his way there he met Mr. Stelling, who had heard from his wife that Maggie appeared to be in trouble when she asked for her brother.

"Please, sir, I must go home," Tom said abruptly. "I must go back with my sister directly. My father has lost his lawsuit—he's lost all his property—and he's very ill."

Mr. Stelling felt like a kind-hearted man; he foresaw a probable money loss for himself, but this had no appreciable share in his feeling, while he looked with grave pity at the brother and sister. When he knew how Maggie had come,

TOM AND MAGGIE TULLIVER

and how eager she was to get home again, he hurried their departure.

While they were standing on the doorstep ready to set out, Mrs. Stelling came with a little basket, which she hung on Maggie's arm, saying: "Do remember to eat something on the way, dear." Maggie's heart went out toward this woman whom she had never before liked, and she kissed her silently. Mr. Stelling put his hand on Tom's shoulder, and said, "God bless you, my boy; let me know how you get on." Then he pressed Maggie's hand, but there were no audible good-byes.

Tom had so often thought how joyful he should be the day he left school "for good," and now his school years seemed like a holiday that had come to an end.

The two slight youthful figures soon grew indistinct on the distant road—were soon lost behind the projecting hedgerow. They had gone forth together into their new life, and they would never more see the sunshine undimmed by remembered cares, for the golden gates of their childhood had forever closed behind them.

TOTTY POYSER



TORTY POYSER.

TOTTY POYSER

ON the opposite side of the hill from Broxton, in the parish of Hayslope, there is a very fine old house of red brick softened by a pale powdery lichen which brings the brick into terms of friendly companionship with the limestone ornaments surrounding the three gables, the windows, and the door-plate. It is evident that the gate which is the entrance to the place is never opened, for the long grass and the hemlocks grow close against it, and its hinges and bars are rusty.

The windows are patched with wooden panes and the door is like the gate—it is never opened—how it would groan and grate against the stone floor if it were! But now there is heard the booming bark of dogs echoing from great buildings at the back; of a surety the house must be inhabited, and we will see by whom. Put your face to the glass panes in the right-hand window, what do you see? A large open fireplace with rusty dogs in it, and a bare boarded floor; at the far end fleeces of wool stacked up, in the middle of the floor some empty corn-bags. That is the furniture of the dining-room. And what through the left-hand window? Several clothes-horses, a pillion, a spinning-wheel, and an old box stuffed full of coloured rags. At the edge of this box lies a great wooden doll, in a state of almost total mutilation. Near it there is a little chair and the butt-end of a boy's leather long-leashed whip.

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

The history of the house is plain enough now. It was once the Hall; it is now the Hall Farm, and life there has changed its focus, and no longer radiates from the parlour, but from the kitchen and the farmyard.

Plenty of life there, though this is the drowsiest time of the year, just before hay harvest; and it is the drowsiest time of the day too. But there is always a strong sense of life when the sun is brilliant after rain; and now he is pouring down his beams, and lighting up every patch of moss on the red tiles of the cow shed, and turning even the muddy water in the drain into a mirror for the yellow-billed ducks, who are seizing the opportunity of getting a drink. There is quite a concert of noises: the great bulldog, exasperated by the unwary approach of a cock too near his kennel, sends forth a thundering bark, which is answered by two fox hounds shut up in the opposite cow house; the old top-knotted hens, scratching with their chicks among the straw, set up a sympathetic croaking as the discomfited cock joins them; a sow with her brood throws in some deep staccato notes, the calves are bleating from the home croft, and under all there may be discerned the continuous hum of human voices.

For the great barn doors are thrown wide open, and men are busy there mending the harness, under the superintendence of Mr. Goby, the "whittaw," otherwise saddler, who entertains them with the latest village gossip. It is an unfortunate day that has been chosen for having the whittaws, since it has turned out so wet; and Mrs. Poyser, mistress of the Hall Farm, has spoken her mind pretty thoroughly as to the dirt which the men's shoes brought into the house at dinner time. Indeed, she has not yet recovered her equanimity on the subject, though it is now nearly three hours since dinner, and the house floor is perfectly clean

TOTTY POYSER

again; as clean as everything else in that wonderful house-place where the only chance of collecting a few grains of dust would be to climb on the salt coffer and put your finger on the high mantle shelf on which the glittering brass candlesticks are enjoying their summer rest—for at this time of year on the Farm everyone goes to bed while it is yet light enough to discern the outline of objects, after you have bruised your shins against them. Surely, nowhere else could an oak clock-case and an oak table have got to such a polish by the hand: “genuine elbow polish” as Mrs. Poyser called it. Hetty Sorrel, Mrs. Poyser’s niece, who lived at the farm, often when her aunt’s back was turned, looked at the pleasing reflection of herself in those polished surfaces, and she could even see herself sometimes in the great pewter dishes that were ranged on the shelves above the dinner table, or in the hobs of the grate, which always shone like jasper.

Everything was looking at its brightest at this moment, for the sun shone right on the pewter dishes, and from their reflecting surfaces pleasant jets of light were thrown on mellow oak and bright brass. No scene could have been more peaceful if Mrs. Poyser, who was ironing, had not made a frequent clinking with her iron, and moving to and fro whenever she wanted it to cool, carrying the keen glance of her blue-grey eye from the kitchen to the dairy, where Hetty was making up the butter, and from the dairy to the back kitchen, where Nancy was taking the pies out of the oven. Mrs. Poyser’s tongue was not less keen than her eye, and all who came within ear-shot now suffered in consequence of having had to have the whittaws on churning day. While Mrs. Poyser was scolding Mollie, the house-maid, for conduct which had seemed exemplary to that young woman, the harangue was suddenly interrupted.

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

"Munny, my iron's twite told; p'ease put it down to warm."

The small chirruping voice that uttered this request came from a little sunny-haired girl between three and four, who, seated on a high chair at the end of the ironing-table, was arduously clutching the handle of a miniature iron with her tiny fat fist, and ironing rags with an assiduity that required her to put her little red tongue out as far as anatomy would allow.

"Cold, is it, my darling? Bless your sweet face!" said Mrs. Poyser. "Never mind! mother's done her ironing now. She's going to put the ironing things away."

"Munny, I tould 'ike to do into de barn to Tommy, to see de whittawd."

"No, no, no; Totty 'ud get her feet wet," said Mrs. Poyser, carrying away her iron. "Run into the dairy, and see Cousin Hetty make the butter."

"I tould 'ike a bit o' pum-take," rejoined Totty, who seemed to be provided with several relays of requests; at the same time taking the opportunity of her momentary leisure to put her fingers into a bowl of starch and drag it down, so as to empty the contents with tolerable completeness on to the ironing sheet.

"Did ever anybody see the like?" screamed Mrs. Poyser, running toward the table when her eye had fallen on the blue stream. "The child's allays i' mischief if your back's turned a minute. What shall I do wi' you, you naughty, naughty gell?"

Totty, however, had descended from her chair with great swiftness, and was already in retreat toward the dairy.

The starch having been wiped up by Molly's help, and the ironing apparatus put by, Mrs. Poyser took up her knitting, which always lay ready at hand, and was the work she liked

TOTTY POYSER

best, because she could carry it on automatically as she walked to and fro. But now she sat down and knitted her grey worsted stocking as she talked with another niece, Dinah Morris, who was making a visit at the Farm. Presently a noise caused her to go to the door, and come back saying in rather a flurried, awe-struck tone:

“If there isn’t Captain Donnithorne and Mr. Irwine a-coming into the yard!”

Her prediction was true, and presently the two gentlemen—one, grandson and heir of Squire Donnithorne of Donnithorne Chase, the estate to which the Hall Farm belonged; the other, Rector of Broxton and Vicar of Hay-slope—got down from their horses and entered the spotless kitchen, where they chatted with Mrs. Poyser until Captain Donnithorne suggested that he had never seen the dairy, to which Mrs. Poyser presently led the way.

The dairy was certainly worth looking at—such coolness, such purity, such fresh fragrance of new-pressed cheese, of firm butter, of wooden vessels perpetually bathed in pure water; such soft colouring of red earthenware and creamy surfaces, brown wood and polished tin, grey limestone and rich orange-red rust on the iron weights and hooks and hinges. But one gets only a confused notion of these details when they surround a distractingly pretty girl of seventeen, rounding her dimpled arm to lift a pound of butter out of the scale.

Moreover, Hetty was particularly clever at making up the butter; it was the one performance of hers that her aunt allowed to pass without severe criticism; so she handled it with all the grace that belongs to mastery.

“I hope you will be ready for a great holiday on the thirtieth of July, Mrs. Poyser,” said Captain Donnithorne, when he had sufficiently admired the dairy. “You know

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

what is to happen, then, on my twenty-first birthday. I shall expect you and your family among the guests who come earliest and leave latest. And you must bring all your children, you know, Mrs. Poyser; your little Totty, as well as the boys. I want all the youngest children on the estate to be there—all those who will be fine young men and women when I'm a bald old fellow. But where is Totty to-day?" he continued; "I want to see her."

The proud mother, unable to resist the temptation to show her Totty, passed at once into the back kitchen in search of her, which gave Captain Donnithorne a chance to talk to Hetty—a chance to which he by no means objected. The reason why there was time for a satisfactory tête-à-tête was because Totty was discovered rubbing a stray blueing-bag against her nose, and in the same moment allowing some liberal indigo drops to fall on her afternoon pinafore. But soon she appeared holding her mother's hand—the end of her round nose rather shiny from a hurried application of soap and water.

"Here she is!" said the Captain, lifting her up and setting her on the low stone shelf. "Here's Totty! By-the-by, what's her other name? She wasn't christened Totty."

"Oh, sir, we call her sadly out of her name. Charlotte's her christened name. It's a name i' Mr. Poyser's family; his grandmother was named Charlotte. But we began with calling her Lotty, and now it's got to Totty. To be sure, it's more like a name for a dog than a Christian child."

"Totty's a capital name. Why, she looks like a Totty. Has she got a pocket on?" said the Captain, feeling in his own waistcoat pockets.

Totty immediately with great gravity lifted up her frock and showed a tiny pink pocket at present in a state of collapse.

TOTTY POYSER

"It dot not'in' in it," she said, as she looked down at it very earnestly.

"No! What a pity! Such a pretty pocket! Well, I think I've got some things in mine that will make a pretty jingle in it. Yes! I declare I've got five little round silver things, and hear what a pretty noise they make in Totty's pink pocket." Here he shook the pocket with the five six-pences in it, and Totty showed her teeth and wrinkled her nose in great glee, but, divining that there was nothing more to be got by staying, she jumped off the shelf and ran away to jingle her pocket in the hearing of Nancy, while her mother called after her, "Oh, for shame, you naughty gell, not to thank the Captain for what he's given you! I'm sure, sir, it's very kind of you; but she's spoiled shameful; her father won't have her said nay in anything, and there's no managing her. It's being the youngest, and th' only gell."

"Oh, she's a funny little fatty; I wouldn't have her different. But I must be going now, for I suppose the rector is waiting for me."

With a "good-bye," a bright glance, and a bow to Hetty, Captain Donnithorne left the dairy, which seemed quite desolate to Hetty after his departure.

One evening not long afterwards, as Hetty and Dinah were coming home together, Mr. Poyser met them at the gate. "Why, lassies, ye're rather late to-night," he said, "the mother's begun to fidgit about you, and she's got the little 'un ill."

They found Mrs. Poyser seated in a rocking-chair trying to soothe Totty to sleep. But Totty was not disposed to sleep; and when her cousins entered, she raised herself up and showed a pair of flushed cheeks, which looked fatter than ever now they were defined by the edge of her linen nightcap.

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

Mrs. Poyser commenced to reproach Hetty for staying away so late, but the scolding was interrupted by Totty, who fearing that the arrival of her cousins was not likely to bring anything satisfactory to her in particular, began to cry, "Munny, munny," in an explosive manner.

"Well, then, my pet, mother's got her, mother won't leave her; Totty be a good dilling and go to sleep now," said Mrs. Poyser, trying to make Totty nestle against her. But Totty only cried louder, and said "Don't yock!" So the mother, with that wondrous patience which love gives to the quickest temperament, sat up again, and pressed her cheek against the linen nightcap and kissed it, and forgot to scold Hetty, who went to the pantry for a bite of cold supper, then came back and stood waiting for her aunt to give the child into her hands.

"Wilt go to Cousin Hetty, my dilling, while mother gets ready to go to bed? Then Totty shall go into mother's bed, and sleep there all night."

Before her mother had done speaking, Totty had given her answer in an unmistakable manner, by knitting her brow, setting her tiny teeth against her under-lip, and leaning forward to slap Hetty on the arm with her utmost force. Then, without speaking, she nestled to her mother again.

"Hey, hey," said Mr. Poyser, while Hetty stood without moving, "not go to Cousin Hetty? That's like a babby: Totty's a little woman, an' not a babby."

"It's no use trying to persuade her," said Mrs. Poyser. "She allays takes against Hetty when she isn't well. Happen she'll go to Dinah."

Dinah had hitherto kept quietly seated in the background, not liking to thrust herself between Hetty and what was considered Hetty's proper work. But now she came forward and putting out her arms, said, "Come, Totty, come

TOTTY POYSER

and let Dinah carry her upstairs along with mother; poor, poor mother! She's so tired—she wants to go to bed."

Totty turned her face toward Dinah and looked at her an instant, then lifted herself up, put out her little arms, and let Dinah lift her from her mother's lap. Hetty turned away without any sign of ill-humour; she considered all the children, Marty and Tommy and Totty, the very nuisance of her life. Marty, the oldest, was a baby when she first came to the farm, and Hetty had had them all three, one after the other, toddling by her side in the meadow, or playing about her on wet days in the large old house. The boys were out of hand, now, but Totty was still a day-long plague, as was the making and mending of her clothes, and Hetty was only too glad to be rid of the child for any length of time.

The heavy wooden bolts now began to roll in the house doors. Mrs. Poyser then led the way out of the kitchen, followed by old Martin, the grandfather, and Dinah with Totty in her arms. Mrs. Poyser, on her way, peeped into the room where her two boys lay, just to see their ruddy round cheeks on the pillow, and to hear for a moment their light regular breathing—then the house was still for the night.

On the following Sunday Mrs. Poyser, with impatience in her voice and manner, called to Hetty, who was keeping the church-goers from starting off:

"Hetty, Hetty, don't you know that church begins at two, and it's gone half after one a'ready?"

"Well, aunt," answered Hetty, "I can't be ready as soon as everybody else when I've got Totty's things to put on. And I'd ever such work to make her stand still."

Hetty was coming downstairs, and Mrs. Poyser in her plain bonnet and shawl was standing below. If ever a girl

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

looked as if she had been made of roses, that girl was Hetty in her Sunday hat and frock. For her hat was trimmed with pink, and her frock had pink spots sprinkled on a white ground. There was nothing but pink and white about her except in her dark hair and eyes and her little buckled shoes. Mrs. Poyser was provoked at herself, for she could hardly keep from smiling at the sight of such a pretty creature. So she turned without speaking and joined the group outside the house door, followed by Hetty. And now the little procession set off. Mr. Poyser was in his Sunday suit of drab, with a red and green waistcoat, and a green watch-ribbon having a large cornelian seal attached; a silk handkerchief of a yellow tone round his neck, and grey-ribbed stockings setting off the proportions of his leg. Mr. Poyser had no reason to be ashamed of his leg. Still less had he reason to be ashamed of his round jolly face, which was good-humour itself as he said, "Come, Hetty—come, little 'uns!" and giving his arm to his wife, led the way through the gate.

The "little 'uns" addressed were Marty and Tommy, boys of nine and seven, in little fustian-tailed coats and knee-breeches, relieved by rosy cheeks and black eyes, looking as much like their father as a very small elephant is like a very large one. Hetty walked between them, and behind came patient Molly, whose task it was to carry Totty through the yard, and over all the wet places on the road; for Totty, having speedily recovered from her threatened fever, had insisted on going to church to-day, and especially on wearing her red and black necklace outside her tippet. And there were many wet places for her to be carried over this afternoon, for there had been heavy showers in the morning, though now the clouds had rolled off.

When the grandfather saw the family ready to start, he opened the gate for them, saying to the black-eyed young-

TOTTY POYSER

sters: "Mind what the parson says—mind what the parson says, my lads!"

"Dood-bye, dan-dad," said Totty. "Me doin' to church. Me dot my netlace on. Dive me a peppermint."

Grand-dad, shaking with laughter at this "deep little wench," slowly thrust his finger into the pocket on which Totty had fixed her eyes, and then the procession moved slowly through the fields.

Suddenly Mrs. Poyser, looking back, exclaimed: "Why, goodness me, look where Molly is with them lads. They're the field's length behind us. Anybody might as well set a pictur to watch the children as you, Hetty! Run back and tell them to come on."

Mr. and Mrs. Poyser were now at the end of the second field, so they set Totty on the top of one of the large stones forming a stile, and awaited the loiterers; Totty observing with complacency, "Dey naughty, naughty boys!"

The fact was that this Sunday walk through the fields was fraught with great excitement to Marty and Tommy, who saw a perpetual drama going on in the hedgerows. Marty was quite sure he saw a yellow-hammer on the boughs of the great ash, and while he was peeping he missed the sight of a white-throated stoat, which had run across the path and was described with much fervour by the junior Tommy. Then there was a little green-finck, just fledged, fluttering along the ground, and it seemed quite possible to catch it, till it managed to flutter under the blackberry bush. Hetty could not be got to give any heed to these things, so Molly was called on for sympathy and peeped with open mouth wherever she was told, and said "Lorks"! whenever she was expected to wonder.

When Hetty came back and called to them that her aunt was angry, Marty ran on first, shouting, "We've found the

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

speckled turkey's nest, mother!" with the instinctive confidence that people who bring good news are never in fault.

"Ah," said Mrs. Poyser, "that's a good lad; why, where is it?"

"Down in ever such a hole, under the hedge. I saw it first, looking after the green-finches, and she sat on the nest."

"You didn't frighten her, I hope," said the mother, "else she'll forsake it."

"No, I went away as still as still, and whispered to Molly —didn't I, Molly?"

"Well, well, now come on," said Mrs. Poyser, "and walk before father and mother, and take your little sister by the hand. We must go straight on now. Good boys don't look after birds of a Sunday."

"But, mother," said Marty, "you said you'd give half a crown to find the speckled turkey's nest. Mayn't I have the half-crown put into my money box?"

"We'll see about that, my lad, if you walk along now like a good boy."

The father and mother exchanged a significant glance of amusement at their eldest born's acuteness; but on Tommy's round face there was a cloud.

"Mother," he said, half-crying, "Marty's got ever so much more money in his box nor I've got in mine."

"Munny, me want half a toun in my bots," said Totty.

"Hush, hush, hush," said Mrs. Poyser. "Did anybody ever hear such naughty children? Nobody shall ever see their money boxes any more, if they don't make haste and go on to church."

This dreadful threat had the desired effect, and through the two remaining fields three pair of small legs trotted on without any serious interruption, notwithstanding a small pond full of tadpoles, which the lads looked at wistfully.

TOTTY POYSER

And even with the interruption in their walk they arrived at church in ample time for the service, after which there was the quiet rising of the congregation for the benediction; the mothers tying on the bonnets of the little maidens who had slept through the sermon, the fathers collecting the prayer books, until all streamed out through the old archway into the green churchyard, and began their neighbourly talk, their simple civilities, and their invitations to tea; for on a Sunday everyone was ready to receive a guest—it was the day when all must be in their best clothes and their best humour. Mr. and Mrs. Poyser paused a minute at the church gate, then with Mr. Craig, the gardener at Donnithorne Chase, for company, went back to the pleasant bright house-place at the Hall Farm.

On the next evening Adam Bede, a neighbour and life-long friend of the Poysers, walked over to the farm to make a visit. When he reached the house-door, Mrs. Poyser called out from the dairy, "Come in, Mr. Bede, come in. I canna justly leave the cheese. You might think you were come to a dead-house," she continued, as he stood in the doorway; "they're all i' the meadow; they're leaving the hay cocked to-night, ready for carrying first thing to-morrow. I'd be glad now, if you'd go into the garden, where Hetty's gatherin' the red currans, and tell her to send Totty in. The child 'll run in if she's told, and I know Hetty's letting her eat too many currans. I'll be much obliged to you, Mr. Bede, if you'll go and send her in; and there's the York and Lankester roses beautiful in the garden now—you'll like to see 'em. But you'd like a drink o' whey first, p'r'aps."

"Thank you, Mrs. Poyser," said Adam, "a drink o' whey is allays a treat to me. I'd rather have it than beer any day."

Then as he took the basin which had been dipped in the

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

whey-tub, he drained its contents, saying, "Here's to your health, Mrs. Poyser; may you allays have strength to look after your own dairy, and set a pattern t' all the farmers' wives in the country."

After this gallant speech he set down the empty basin and walked round by the rick-yard into the garden—a true farmhouse garden with hardy perennial flowers, unpruned fruit trees, and kitchen vegetables growing together in careless, half-neglected abundance. In that leafy, flowery, bushy time, to look for anyone in this garden was like playing at hide-and-seek. There were the tall holly-hocks, pink, white, and yellow; there were the syringas and Guelders roses; there were leafy walls of scarlet beans and late peas; there was a row of bushy filberts in one direction, and in another a huge apple tree. The very rose trees looked as if they grew wild. Adam, after plucking a rose, walked to the far end of the garden, where he remembered there was the largest row of currant trees. But he had not gone many steps beyond the roses when he heard the shaking of a bough, and a boy's voice saying:

"Now, then, Totty, hold out your pinny—there's a duck."

The voice came from the boughs of a tall cherry tree, where Adam had no difficulty in discerning a small blue-pinafored figure perched in a commodious position where the fruit was thickest. Doubtless Totty was below, behind the screen of peas. Yes—with her bonnet hanging down her back, and her fat face, dreadfully smeared with red juice, turned up toward the cherry tree, while she held her little round hole of a mouth and her red stained pinafore to receive the promised downfall. I am sorry to say, more than half the cherries that fell were hard and yellow instead of juicy and red; but Totty spent no time in useless regrets,

TOTTY POYSER

and she was already sucking the third juiciest when Adam said, "There, now, Totty, you've got your cherries. Run into the house with 'em to mother—she wants you—she's in the dairy. Run in this minute—there's a good little girl."

He lifted her up in his strong arms and kissed her as he spoke, and when he set her down she trotted off quite silently toward the house, sucking her cherries as she went along.

"Tommy, my lad, take care you're not shot for a little thieving bird," Adam called back, as he walked on toward the currant trees, where he found Hetty gathering the low hanging fruit, and where he spent a half hour with her.

When he took up the basket of currants and they went toward the house, the scene there was quite changed. Marty was letting the screaming geese through the gate, and wickedly provoking the gander by hissing at him, and the horses were being led out to watering amidst much barking of all the three dogs. Everybody had come back from the meadow, Mr. Poyser was seated, and the grandfather in a large armchair opposite was looking on with pleasant expectation while the supper was being laid on the oak table. The cold veal, the fresh lettuces, and the stuffed chine looked very tempting, and soon all the family with the exception of Totty, who had been put to bed, were partaking of the simple meal.

In the month following that quiet evening at the farm there were busy days of harvesting for all hands, but they passed quickly, as days of work always do, and soon the thirtieth of July was come. The farmers and labourers in Hayslope and Broxton thought the young Squire did well to come of age just then, in the pause between hay and corn harvest, when they could give their undivided minds to the flavour of the great cask of ale which had been brewed the

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

autumn after "the heir" was born, and was to be tapped on his twenty-first birthday.

The church bells rang merrily on the fete-day morning, and all hands on the farm made haste to get through their needful work before twelve, when it would be time to get ready to go to Donnithorne Chase.

When Hetty went downstairs she found the whole party assembled in their best clothes, ready to get into the covered cart, without springs, which was ready to convey them to the seat of the gayeties. All Broxton and all Hayslope were to be at the Chase to make merry there in honour of the heir—in accordance with English custom and tradition. The church bells had struck up again now, and before they had finished other music was heard approaching, so that even the sober old horse that was drawing Mr. Poyser's cart began to prick up his ears. It was the band of the Benefit Club, which had mustered in all its glory in honour of the day.

"Why, the Chase is like a fair, already!" exclaimed Mrs. Poyser, as she got down from the cart, and saw the groups scattered under the great oaks, and the boys running about in the hot sunshine to survey the tall poles surmounted by the fluttering garments that were to be the prize of the successful climbers. "I should ha' thought there wasna so many people i' the two parishes. Mercy on us! How hot it is out o' the shade! Come here, Totty, else your little face 'ull be burnt to a scratchin'. I shall go to the house-keeper's room and sit down."

Through all the hours of that memorable day the programme was carried on without a hitch. First in importance came the elaborate dinner, after which draughts of the birthday ale were drunk by all, and the young squire made a little speech of welcome, which was answered by Mr. Poyser,

TOTTY POYSER

whose flattering response ended up with: "Now we'll drink our young Squire's health—three times three."

Hereupon a glorious shouting, a rapping, a jingling, a clattering, pleasanter than a strain of sublimest music in the ears that receive such a tribute for the first time. Arthur Donnithorne then thanked them all for their good wishes, and proposed several toasts, which were drunk with enthusiasm, when the party broke up and dispersed over the great lawns, where the band of the Benefit Club was playing jigs and reels and hornpipes for any lads and lasses who liked to dance on the shady grass, and where, too, there was a grand band hired from a neighbouring village, to say nothing of Joshua Rann's fiddle, which he had brought with him in case anyone should have the good taste to prefer dancing to a solo.

Presently, when the sun had moved off the great open space in front of the house, the games began. There were well-soaped poles to be climbed by the boys and youths, races to be run by the old women, races to be run in sacks, heavy weights to be lifted by the strong men, and a long list of other challenges. To crown all, there was a donkey race—conducted on the socialistic idea of everybody encouraging everybody else's donkey—and the sorriest donkey winning.

And soon after four o'clock splendid old Mrs. Irwine, the rector's mother, was led out by Arthur Donnithorne to her raised seat under the striped marquee (tent) to give out the prizes to the victors. Only one friend of the family, a Mr. Gawaine, was invited to-day beside the rector and his family. There was to be a grand dinner for the neighbouring gentry on the morrow, but to-day all the forces were required for the entertainment of the tenants.

At eight o'clock in the evening came the great ball, and

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

the entrance hall in which it was held was just the sort of place to be ornamented well with green boughs, and Mr. Craig had been proud to show his taste and his hothouse plants on this occasion. The lights were charmingly disposed in coloured paper lamps high up among the boughs, and the farmers' wives and daughters thought no scene could be more splendid. Arthur Donnithorne had put on his uniform to please the tenants, who thought as much of his militia dignity as if it had been an elevation to the premiership, and he had a pleasant word for everyone, while the old Squire, aristocratic in speech and bearing, as always, made polite speeches to the guests and their wives in his usual polished manner.

In order to balance the honours given to the two parishes, Miss Irwine danced with the largest Broxton farmer and Mr. Gawaine led out the farmer's wife. Then the less distinguished couples took their places, and the glorious country-dance, best of all dances, began. It was an evening of complete enjoyment to almost everyone present, and Hetty was amongst those least indifferent to its pleasures, which would have been quite perfect had it not been for one irritating incident. She was at the far end of the hall, with the sleeping Totty in her arms, as Molly had gone to fetch the children's shawls and bonnets, for the hour at which they were to be taken home had come. Mrs. Poyser had taken the two boys to the dining-room to give them some cake before they went home, and Adam Bede was with Hetty, who thankfully accepted his offer to hold Totty, for the heavy child was no easy burden to hold standing. But the transfer wakened Totty, and while Hetty was placing her in Adam's arms, and had not yet withdrawn her own, Totty fought out sleepily with her left fist at Adam's arm, and with her right caught at the string of beads around

TOTTY POYSER

Hetty's neck. This broke the string, and scattered the beads wide on the floor, while the locket attached to them lay open, exposing the picture it held to Adam's view, which did not please Hetty, who by no means wanted him to see it. This incident increased Hetty's dislike to fat little Totty and marred her evening's pleasure, but to Adam Bede the evening had been most enjoyable, because of the honours paid to him at the celebration, and, also, because of his pleasure in being where Hetty was.

Some weeks later, on a Sunday, Adam went home with the Poysers from church, and after tea, when the boys were going into the garden with Hetty, and Totty begged to go with them, he had the pleasure of accompanying the little party. Presently Totty was missing, and Hetty, who went to find her, came back leading the child, who was making a sour face, for she had been obliged to throw away an unripe apple that she had set her small teeth in.

"Hegh, Totty," said Adam, "come and ride on my shoulder—ever so high—you'll touch the tops o' the trees."

What little child ever refused to be comforted by that glorious sense of being seized strongly and swung upward? I don't believe Ganymede cried when the eagle carried him away, and perhaps deposited him on Jove's shoulder at the end. Totty smiled down complacently from her secure height, and pleasant was the sight to the mother's eyes as she stood at the door and saw Adam coming with his small burthen.

"Bless your sweet face, my pet," she said, as Totty leaned forward and put out her arms, the mother's strong love filling her keen eyes and heart with mildness.

The next glimpse we have of Totty is over a year later. Dinah, who is at the farm and by whose side Totty is sitting,

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

had borne patiently to have her thread broken three times by Totty pulling at her arm with a sudden insistence that she should look at "Baby," that is, at a large wooden doll with no legs and a long skirt, whose bald head Totty was pressing to her fat cheek with much fervour. Tommy, who was near by, soon began with true brotherly sympathy to turn dolly's skirt over her bald head and exhibit her truncated body to the general scorn—an indignity which cut Totty to the heart.

Totty is larger by more than two years' growth than when you first saw her, and she has on a black frock under her pinafore; Mrs. Poyser, too, has on a black gown, for in the past eighteen months sorrow has come to the inmates of the Hall Farm. In other respects there is little outward change discernible in our old friends, or in the pleasant house-place, bright with polished pewter, and little fat Totty could have no happier home than that same farm where we first saw her. As Mrs. Poyser talked with Dinah, she turned hastily to look at the clock, and said:

"See there! It's tea-time. Totty, my chicken, you go out into the rick-yard and tell father he mustn't go away again without coming t' a have a cup o' tea, and tell your brothers to come in, too."

Totty trotted off in her flapping bonnet, while Mrs. Poyser reached down the teacups, and presently exclaimed, "Look there. There's Adam Bede a-carrying the little 'un in."

Mrs. Poyser hastened to the door for the pleasure of looking at her darling, love in her eyes, but reproach on her tongue.

"Oh, for shame, Totty! Little gells o' five year old should be ashamed to be carried. Why, Adam, she'll break your arm, such a big gell as that. Set her down, for shame!"

TOTTY POYSER

"Nay, nay," said Adam, "I can lift her with my hand. I've no need to take my arm to it."

Totty, looking as serenely unconscious of remark as a fat white puppy, was set down at the door-place, and the mother enforced her reproof with a shower of kisses—which may be accepted as a fair sign of the way in which the hardships of Totty's future were always to be tempered by that which makes a rose-garden of the veriest wilderness, that deepest, tenderest affection which this world can give—a mother's love. Happy little Totty!

EPPIE

L OF L.



EPIE AND SILAS MARNER.

EPPIE

IN the early years of this century a linen weaver, named Silas Marner, worked at his vocation in a stone cottage that stood among the hedgerows near the village of Raveloe, not far from a deserted stone-pit. The sound of Silas's loom, so unlike that of the winnowing-machine, or the simpler rhythm of the flail, had a half-fearful fascination for the Raveloe boys, who would often leave off their nutting or bird's nesting to peep in at the window of the cottage. Sometimes it happened that Marner became aware of the small scoundrels, and liked their intrusions so ill that he would descend from his loom, and, opening the door, would fix on them a gaze that was always enough to make them take to their legs in terror.

It was fifteen years since Silas Marner had first come to Raveloe; he was then simply a pallid young man, with prominent short-sighted brown eyes, whose appearance would have had nothing strange for people of average culture and experience; but for the villagers it had mysterious peculiarities which corresponded with the exceptional nature of his occupation, and his advent from an unknown region called "North'ard." So had his way of life:—he invited no comer to step across his doorsill, he never strolled into the village to drink a pint at the Rainbow Inn, or to gossip at the wheelwright's; he sought no man or woman save for the purposes of his calling, or in order to supply

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

himself with necessaries. And the years rolled on, producing scarcely any change in the impressions of the neighbours concerning him. There was only one important addition to what the Raveloe men said about him, which was, that Master Marner had laid by a fine sight of money somewhere, and that he could buy up bigger men than himself.

But while opinion concerning him had remained nearly stationary, and his daily habits had presented scarcely any visible change, Marner's inner life had been the history of a fervid nature which had been condemned through circumstances to solitude. His life before he came to Raveloe had been an active one, for he had been one of the most enthusiastic and useful citizens of the little hidden world of Lantern Yard, until the time when he was unjustly accused of a crime which he himself knew to have been committed by his closest friend. That friend not only robbed Marner of his good name, but won from him the affection of the young woman to whom Marner was about to be married. For a day the weaver sat alone. The second day he took refuge in working away at his loom as usual, and in little less than a month later it was known to the brethren in Lantern Yard that Silas Marner had departed from the town.

In the little cottage at Raveloe he worked unremittingly, seeming to weave like the spider, from pure impulse, without thinking of the money it would bring in. Every man's work, pursued steadily, tends in this way to become an end in itself, and so to bridge over the loveless chasms of his life. Silas's hand satisfied itself with throwing the shuttle, and his eye with seeing the little squares in the cloth complete themselves under his effort. He had also in his solitude, to provide his own meals, to fetch his own water

EPPIE

from the well, and put his own kettle on the fire, and all these promptings helped, along with the weaving, to reduce his life to the unquestioning activity of a spinning insect. Gradually the guineas, the crowns, and the half-crowns grew to a heap. In this strange world, made a hopeless riddle to him, the money had come to mark off his weaving into periods, and the money not only grew, but it remained with him. He handled the coins, he counted them, but it was only in the night that he drew them out to enjoy their companionship. He had taken up some bricks in his floor where he made a hole in which he set the iron pot containing his guineas, covering the bricks with sand whenever he replaced them.

So year after year Silas Marner had lived in this solitude alone with his gold, until the Christmas of the fifteenth year, when, one night, removing the bricks, he saw only an empty hole, a sight which made his heart leap violently. But the belief that his gold was gone could not come at once. He searched in every corner, he even turned his bed over and shook it, he looked in his brick oven where he laid his sticks. When there was no other place to be searched, he felt once more all round the hole. There was no untried refuge left for a moment's shelter from the terrible truth. He could see every object in his cottage—and his gold was not there. He put his trembling hands to his head, and gave a wild cry of desolation, then the idea of a thief began to present itself, and he entertained it eagerly, because a thief might be caught and made to restore the gold. He hastened from the door and ran swiftly out in the rain until he entered the village and passed through the door of the Rainbow. When Marner entered the Inn with his tale of robbery, it created intense excitement and gave the weaver a strange new feeling of intimacy with his neighbours as he freely discussed

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

the matter with them. But from all their suggestions and later investigation no light was thrown on the subject. The loom was there, and the weaving, and the growing pattern in the cloth; but the bright treasure in the hole under his feet was gone; the prospect of handling it and counting it was gone; the evening had no ghost of delight to still the poor soul's craving. The thought of the money he would get by his actual work could bring no joy, for its meagre image was only a fresh reminder of his loss; and hope was too heavily crushed by the sudden blow for his imagination to dwell on the growth of a new hoard from that small beginning.

As he sat weaving he every now and then moaned like one in pain. And every evening, as he sat in his loneliness by his dull fire, he leaned his elbows on his knees, and clasped his head with his hands, and moaned very low—not as one who seeks to be heard.

And yet he was not utterly forsaken in his trouble. His misfortune had changed the repulsion which he had always created in his neighbours to a kindlier feeling. This feeling was shown in various ways, according to the respective characters of his comforters, among whom was Mrs. Dolly Winthrop. This good, wholesome woman was drawn strongly toward Silas Marner now that he appeared in the light of a sufferer; and one Sunday afternoon she took her little boy Aaron with her and went to call on Silas, carrying with her some flat, paste-like lard cakes, much esteemed in Raveloe.

They had to knock loudly before Silas heard them, and when he opened the door to admit them his greeting was without cordiality. Dolly Winthrop removed the white cloth that covered her lard cakes and said in her gravest way:

EPPIE

"I'd a baking yesteray, Master Marner, and the lard cakes turned out better nor common, and I'd asked you to accept some, if you'd thought well."

Dolly sighed gently as she held out the cakes to Silas, who thanked her kindly and looked very close at them, absently, being accustomed to look so at everything he took into his hand—eyed all the while by the wondering bright orbs of the small Aaron, an apple-cheeked youngster of seven, with a clean starched frill, who had made an outwork of his mother's chair, and was peeping round from behind it.

"There's letters pricked on 'em," said Dolly. "I can't read 'em myself, but they've a good meaning, for they're the same as is on the pulpit cloth at church. What are they, Aaron, my dear?"

Aaron retreated completely behind his outwork.

"Oh, go, that's naughty," said his mother mildly. "Well, whatever the letters are, it's a stamp as has been in our house, my husband says, ever since he was a little 'un, and his mother used to put it on the cakes, and I've allays put it on too; for if there's any good, we've need of it i' this world."

"It's I. H. S.," said Silas, at which proof of learning Aaron peeped round the chair again.

"Well, to be sure, you can read 'em off," said Dolly. "They's good letters, else they wouldn't be in the church; and I hope they'll bring good to you, Master Marner, for it's with that will I brought you the cakes."

Silas was as unable to interpret the letters as Dolly, but there was no possibility of misunderstanding the desire to give comfort that made itself heard in her quiet tones. He said with more feeling than before, "Thank you—thank you kindly." But he laid down the cakes and seated himself absently—drearly unconscious of any distinct benefit to-

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

ward which the cakes, the letters, or even Dolly's kindness, could tend for him, while the good woman attempted to urge upon him a bit of her simple Raveloe theology of which she felt he was in sad need.

But little Aaron, having now become used to the weaver's awful presence, had meanwhile advanced to his mother's side, and Silas, seeming to notice him for the first time, tried to return Dolly's signs of goodwill by offering him a bit of lard cake. Aaron shrank back a little, but still thought the piece of cake worth the risk of putting his hand out for it.

"Oh, for shame, Aaron," said his mother, taking him on her lap, however; "why, you don't want cake yet awhile! He's wonderful hearty," she went on; "he's my youngest, and we spoil him sadly. And he's got a voice like a bird —you wouldn't think," Dolly went on; "he can sing a Christmas carol as his father's taught him. Come, Aaron, stan' up and sing the carol to Master Marner, come."

Aaron was not indisposed to display his talents, and after a few signs of coyness, such as rubbing his forehead against his mother's shoulder, and the backs of his hands over his eyes, and then peeping between them at Master Marner to see if he looked anxious for the "carol," he at length stood behind the table, which let him appear above it only as far as his broad frill, so that he looked like a cherubic head untroubled by a body, as he began with a clear chirp, and in a melody that had the rhythm of an industrious hammer, sang:

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day."

Dolly listened with a devout look; "That's Christmas music," she said when Aaron had ended and had secured his

EPPIE

piece of cake again. “There’s no other music equil to the Christmas music. And you may judge what it is at church, Master Marner, with the bassoon and the voices, as you can’t help thinking you’ve got to a better place a’ready. The boy sings pretty, don’t he, Master Marner?”

“Yes,” said Silas absently, “very pretty.”

Then, wishing to show Dolly that he was grateful, the only mode that occurred to him was to offer Aaron a bit more cake.

“Oh, no, thank you, Master Marner,” said Dolly, holding down Aaron’s willing hands. “We must be going home now. And so I wish you good-bye, Master Marner; and if you ever feel anyways bad in your inside, as you can’t fend for yourself, I’ll come and clean up for you, and get you a bit of victual, and willing. But I beg and pray of you to leave off weaving of a Sunday, for it’s bad for soul and body—and the money as comes i’ that way ‘ull be a bad bed to lie down on at the last, if it doesn’t fly away, nobody knows where, like the white frost. And you’ll excuse me being that free with you, Master Marner, for I wish you well—I do. Make your bow, Aaron.”

Silas couldn’t help feeling relieved when she was gone—relieved that he might weave again and moan at his ease, and notwithstanding her honest persuasion, he spent his Christmas day in loneliness, eating his meat in sadness of heart, though the meat had come to him as a neighbourly present. Toward evening the snow began to fall, shutting him close up with his narrow grief.

Nobody in this world but himself knew that he was the same Silas Marner who had once loved his fellow with tender love, and trusted in an unseen goodness. Even to himself that past experience had become dim. So the days wore out their slow lengths until the morning came when he

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

had been told by some of his neighbours that it was New Year's Eve, and that he must sit up and hear the old year rung out and the new rung in, because that was good luck, and might bring his money back again. This was only a friendly Raveloe way of jesting with the half-crazy oddities of a miser, but it had helped to throw Silas into an excited state. Since the oncoming of twilight he had opened his door again and again, only to see all distance veiled by the falling snow. But the last time he opened it the snow had ceased, and the clouds were parting here and there. He stood and listened, and gazed for a long while—there was really something on the road coming toward him then, but he caught no sign of it; and the stillness and the wide trackless snow seemed to narrow his solitude, and touched his yearning with the chill of despair. For a long while he stood like a graven image looking at the untrodden world without, until at last he became conscious that the light had grown dim and that he was chilled and faint.

Meanwhile, not far from his cottage, a sick, benumbed woman carrying a child had sunk down into a bed of soft snow. Complete torpor came at last, her arms relaxed their clutch on the slumbering little one, then the little head fell away from the bosom, and the blue eyes opened wide on the cold starlight. At first there was a little peevish cry of "Mammy!" but mammy's ear was deaf, and the pillow seemed to be slipping away backward. Suddenly the child's eyes were caught by a bright glancing light on the white ground, and it was immediately absorbed in watching the bright living thing running toward it yet never arriving. That bright living thing must be caught; and in an instant the child had slipped on all fours, and held out one little hand to catch the gleam. But the gleam would not be caught in that way, and now the head was held

EPPIE

up to see where it came from. It came from a very bright place, and the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow, the old shawl in which it was wrapped trailing behind it, and the queer little bonnet dangling at its back—toddled on, to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage, past Silas,—who stood as one in a trance, with eyes that seeing, saw not,—and into the cottage, where there was a bright fire which had thoroughly warmed the old sack (Silas' great coat) spread out on the bricks to dry. The little one squatted down on the sack, and spread its tiny hands toward the blaze, in perfect contentment, making many inarticulate communications to the cheerful fire. But presently the warmth had a lulling effect, and the little golden head sank down on the old sack and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate half-transparent lids. Turning toward the hearth after his long reverie at the open door, Silas Marner seated himself on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when to his blurred vision it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold!—his own gold—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child—a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister come back to him in a dream—his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. Was it a dream? He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, which raised a flame; but the flame did not disperse the vision—only lit up more distinctly the little round form of the child, and its shabby clothing. It was very much like his little sister. Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories. How and when had the child come in without his knowledge? He had never been beyond the door.

There was a cry on the hearth: the child had awakened, and Marner stooped to lift it on his knee. It clung round his neck, and burst louder and louder into cries of "Mammy." Silas pressed it to him, and almost unconsciously uttered sounds of hushing tenderness, while he be-thought himself that some of his porridge, which had got cool by the dying fire, would do to feed the child with if it were only warmed up a little.

He had plenty to do through the next hour. The porridge, sweetened with some dry brown sugar from an old store which he had refrained from using for himself, stopped the cries of the little one, and made her lift her blue eyes with a wide quiet gaze at Silas, as he put the spoon into her mouth. Presently she slipped from his knee and began to toddle about, but with a pretty stagger that made Silas jump up and follow her lest she should fall against anything that would hurt her. But she only fell in a sitting posture on the ground, and began to pull at her boots, looking up at him with a crying face as if the boots hurt her. He took her on his knee again, but it was some time before it occurred to Silas's dull bachelor mind that the wet boots were a grievance, pressing on her warm ankles. He got them off with difficulty, and baby was at once happily occupied

EPPIE

with the primary mystery of her own toes, inviting Silas, with much chuckling, to consider the mystery, too. But the wet boots had at last suggested to Silas that the child had been walking on the snow, and this roused him from his entire oblivion of any ordinary means by which it could have entered or been brought into his house. Under the prompting of this new idea, and without waiting to form conjectures, he raised the child in his arms, and went to the door. As soon as he had opened it, there was the cry of "mammy" again, which Silas had not heard since the child's first hungry waking. Bending forward, he could just discern the marks made by the little feet on the snow, and he followed their track to the furze bushes. "Mammy!" the little one cried again and again, stretching itself forward so as almost to escape from Silas's arm, and then Silas made the discovery that the child's mother had gone to her last resting place—that she would never claim the little one, if he chose to keep her.

Silas Marner's determination to keep the "tramp's child" was matter of hardly less surprise and iterated talk in the village than the robbery of his money. That softening of feeling toward him which dated from his misfortune, that merging of suspicion and dislike in a rather contemptuous pity for him as lone and crazy, was now accompanied with a more active sympathy, especially amongst the women. Mothers were equally interested in conjecturing how a lone man would manage with a two-year-old child on his hands, and were equally ready with their suggestions; the notable chiefly telling him what he had better do, and the lazy ones being emphatic in telling him what he would never be able to do.

Among the notable mothers, Dolly Winthrop was the one whose neighbourly offices were the most acceptable to

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

Marner, nor they were rendered without any show of bustling instruction.

"Eh, Master Marner," said Dolly, "there's no call to buy, no more nor a pair o' shoes; for I've got the little petticoats as Aaron wore five years ago, and it's ill spending money on them baby-clothes, for the child 'ull grow like grass i' May, bless it—that it will."

And the same day Dolly brought her bundle, and displayed to Marner, one by one, the tiny garments in their due order of succession, most of them patched and darned, but clean and neat as fresh-sprung herbs. This was the introduction to a great ceremony with soap and water, from which baby came out in new beauty, and sat on Dolly's knee, handling her toes and chuckling and patting her palms together with an air of having made several discoveries about herself, which she communicated by alternate sounds of "gug-gug-gug" and "mammy."

"Anybody 'ud think the angils in heaven couldn't be prettier," said Dolly, rubbing the golden curls and kissing them. "And to think of its being covered wi' them dirty rags—and the poor mother—froze to death; but there's Them as took care of it, and brought it to your door, Master Marner. The door was open, and it walked in over the snow, like as if it had been a little starved robin. Didn't you say the door was open?"

"Yes," said Silas, meditatively. "Yes—the door was open. The money's gone I don't know where, and this is come from I don't know where."

"Ah," said Dolly, with soothing gravity, "it's like the night and the morning, and the sleeping and the waking, and the rain and the harvest—one goes and the other comes, and we know nothing how nor where. We may strive and scrat and fend, but it's little we can do arter all—the big

EPPIE

things come and go wi' no striving o' our'n—they do, that they do; and I think you're in the right on it to keep the little un, Master Marner, seeing as it's been sent to you, though there's folks as thinks different. You'll happen be a bit moithered with it while it's so little; but I'll come, and welcome, and see to it for you; I've a bit o' time to spare most days, tow'rt ten, afore it's time to go about the victual. So, as I say, I'll come and see to the child for you, and welcome."

"Thank you—kindly," said Silas, hesitating a little. "I'll be glad if you'll tell me things. But," he added, uneasily, leaning forward to look at Baby with some jealousy, as she was resting her head backward against Dolly's arm, and eyeing him contentedly from a distance—"But I want to do things for it myself, else it may get fond o' somebody else, and not fond o' me. I've been used to fending for myself in the house—I can learn, I can learn."

"Eh, to be sure," said Dolly, gently. "I've seen men as are wonderful handy wi' children. You see this goes first, next the skin," proceeded Dolly, taking up the little shirt, and putting it on.

"Yes," said Marner, docilely, bringing his eyes very close, that they might be initiated in the mysteries; whereupon Baby seized his head with both her small arms, and put her lips against his face with purring noises.

"See there," said Dolly, with a woman's tender tact, "she's fondest o' you. She wants to go o' your lap, I'll be bound. Go, then: take her, Master Marner; you can put the things on, and then you can say as you've done for her from the first of her coming to you."

Marner took her on his lap, trembling with an emotion mysterious to himself, at something unknown dawning on his life. Thought and feeling were so confused within him,

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

that if he had tried to give them utterance, he could only have said that the child was come instead of the gold—that the gold had turned into the child. He took the garments from Dolly, and put them on under her teaching; interrupted, of course, by Baby's gymnastics.

"There, then! why, you take to it quite easy, Master Marner," said Dolly; "but what shall you do when you're forced to sit in your loom? For she'll get busier and mischievouser every day—she will, bless her. It's lucky as you've got that high hearth i'stead of a grate, for that keeps the fire more out of her reach: but if you've got anything as can be spilt or broke, or as is fit to cut her fingers off, she'll be at it—and it is but right you should know."

Silas meditated a little while in some perplexity. "I'll tie her to the leg o' the loom," he said at last—"tie her with a good long strip o' something."

"Well, mayhap that'll do, as it's a little gell, for they're easier persuaded to sit i' one place nor the lads. I know what the lads are; for I've had four—four I've had, God knows—and if you was to take and tie 'em up, they'd make a fighting and a crying as if you was ringing the pigs. But I'll bring you my little chair, and some bits o' red rag and things for her to play wi'; an' she'll sit and chatter to 'em as if they was alive. Eh, if it wasn't a sin to the lads to wish 'em made different, bless 'em, I should ha' been glad for one of 'em to be a little gell; and to think as I could ha' taught her to scour, and mend, and the knitting, and everything. But I can teach 'em this little un, Master Marner, when she gets old enough."

"But she'll be my little un," said Marner, rather hastily. "She'll be nobody else's."

"No, to be sure; you'll have a right to her, if you're a father to her, and bring her up according. But," added

EPPIE

Dolly, coming to a point which she had determined beforehand to touch upon, “you must bring her up like christened folks’s children, and take her to church, and let her learn her catechism, as my little Aaron can say off—the ‘I believe,’ and everything, and ‘hurt nobody by word or deed,’—as well as if her was the clerk. That’s what you must do, Master Marner, if you’d do the right thing by the orphan child.”

Marner’s pale face flushed suddenly under a new anxiety.

“And it’s my belief,” Dolly went on, “the poor little creature has never been christened, and it’s nothing but right as the parson should be spoke to; and if you was noways unwilling, I’d talk to Mr. Macey about it this very day. For if the child ever went anyways wrong, and you hadn’t done your part by it, Master Marner—it ’ud be a thorn i’ your bed forever o’ this side the grave.”

Dolly had spoken from the depths of her own simple belief, and was much concerned to know whether her words would produce the desired effect on Silas. He was puzzled and anxious, for Dolly’s word “christened” conveyed no distinct meaning to him.

“What is it you mean by ‘christened’?” he said at last, timidly. “Won’t folk be good to her without it?”

“Dear, dear! Master Marner,” said Dolly, with gentle distress and compassion. “Had you never no father nor mother as taught you to say your prayers, and as there’s good words and good things to keep us from harm?”

“Yes,” said Silas, in a low voice; “I know a deal about that—used to, used to. But your ways are different: my country was a good way off.” He paused a few moments, and then added, more decidedly, “But I want to do everything as can be done for the child. And whatever’s right

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

for it i' this country, and you think 'ull do it good, I'll act according, if you'll tell me."

"Well, then, Master Marner," said Dolly, inwardly rejoiced, "I'll ask Mr. Macey to speak to the parson about it; and you must fix on a name for it, because it must have a name giv' it when it's christened."

"My mother's name was Hephzibah," said Silas, "and my little sister was named after her."

"Eh, that's a hard name," said Dolly. "I partly think it isn't a christened name."

"It's a Bible name," said Silas, old ideas recurring.

"Then I've no call to speak again' it," said Dolly, rather startled by Silas's knowledge on this head. "But it was awk'ard calling your little sister by such a hard name, when you'd got nothing big to say, like—wasn't it, Master Marner?"

"We called her Eppie," said Silas.

"Well, if it was noways wrong to shorten the name, it 'ud be a deal handier. And so I'll go now, Master Marner, and I'll speak about the christening afore dark; and I wish you the best o' luck, and it's my belief as it'll come to you if you do what's right by the orphin child; and there's the 'noculation to be seen to; and as to washing its bits o' things, you need look to nobody but me, for I can do 'em wi' one hand when I've got my suds about. Eh, the blessed angil! You'll let me bring my Aaron one o' these days, and he'll show her his little cart as his father's made for him, and the black-and-white pup as he's got a-rearing."

Baby was christened, and on this occasion Silas, making himself as clean and tidy as he could, appeared for the first time within the church, and shared in the observances held sacred by his neighbours. He had no distinct idea about the baptism and the church-going, except that Dolly had

EPPIE

said it was for the good of the child; and in this way, as the weeks grew to months, the child created fresh and fresh links between his life and the lives from which he had hitherto shrunk continually into narrower isolation. Unlike the gold which needed nothing, and must be worshipped in close-locked solitude, Eppie was a creature of endless claims and ever-growing desires, seeking and loving sunshine, and living sounds, and living movements; making trial of everything, with trust in new joy, and stirring the human-kindness in all eyes that looked on her. The gold had kept his thoughts in an ever-repeated circle, leading to nothing beyond itself; but Eppie was an object composed of changes and hopes that forced his thoughts onward, and carried them far away from their old eager pacing toward the same blank limit—carried them away to the new things that would come with the coming years, when Eppie would have learned to understand how her father Silas cared for her; and made him look for images of that time in the ties and charities that bound together the families of his neighbours. The gold had asked that he should sit weaving longer and longer, deafened and blinded more and more to all things except the monotony of his loom and the repetition of his web; but Eppie called him away from his weaving, and made him think all its pauses a holiday, reawakening his senses with her fresh life, even to the old winter-flies that came crawling forth in the early spring sunshine, and warming him into joy because she had joy.

And when the sunshine grew strong and lasting, so that the buttercups were thick in the meadows, Silas might be seen in the sunny mid-day, or in the late afternoon when the shadows were lengthening under the hedgerows, strolling out with uncovered head to carry Eppie beyond the Stone-pits to where the flowers grew, till they reached some fav-

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

ourite bank where he could sit down, while Eppie toddled to pluck the flowers, and make remarks to the winged things that murmured happily above the bright petals, calling “Dad-dad’s” attention continually by bringing him the flowers. Then she would turn her ear to some sudden bird-note, and Silas learned to please her by making signs of hushed stillness, that they might listen for the note to come again: so that when it came, she set up her small back and laughed with gurgling triumph. Sitting on the banks in this way, Silas began to look for the once familiar herbs again; and as the leaves lay on his palm, there was a sense of crowding remembrances from which he turned away timidly, taking refuge in Eppie’s little world, that lay lightly on his enfeebled spirit.

It was an influence which must gather force with every new year: the tones that stirred Silas’s heart grew articulate, and called for more distinct answers; shapes and sounds grew clearer for Eppie’s eyes and ears, and there was more that “Dad-dad” was imperatively required to notice and account for. Also, by the time Eppie was three years old, she developed a fine capacity for mischief, and for devising ingenious ways of being troublesome, which found much exercise, not only for Silas’s patience, but for his watchfulness and penetration. Sorely was poor Silas puzzled on such occasions by the incompatible demands of love. Dolly Winthrop told him that punishment was good for Eppie, and that, as for rearing a child without making it tingle a little in soft and safe places now and then, it was not to be done.

“To be sure, there’s another thing you might do, Master Marner,” added Dolly, meditatively; “you might shut her up once in the coal-hole. That was what I did wi’ Aaron; for I was that silly wi’ the youngest lad as I could never bear

EPPIE

to smack him. Not as I could find i' my heart to let him stay i' the coal-hole more nor a minute, but it was enough to colly him all over, so as he must be new washed and dressed, and it was as good as a rod to him—that was. But I put it upo' your conscience, Master Marner, as there's one of 'em you must choose—ayther smacking or the coal-hole—else she'll get so masterful there'll be no holding her."

Silas was impressed with the melancholy truth of this last remark; but his force of mind failed before the only two penal methods open to him, not only because it was painful to him to hurt Eppie, but because he trembled at a moment's contention with her, lest she should love him the less for it. Let even an affectionate Goliath get himself tied to a small tender thing, dreading to hurt it by pulling, and dreading still more to snap the cord, and which of the two, pray, will be master? It was clear that Eppie, with her short toddling steps, must lead father Silas a pretty dance on any fine morning when circumstances favoured mischief.

For example: He had wisely chosen a broad strip of linen as a means of fastening her to his loom when he was busy: it made a broad belt round her waist, and was long enough to allow of her reaching the trundle-bed and sitting down on it, but not long enough for her to attempt any dangerous climbing. One bright summer's morning Silas had been more engrossed than usual in "setting up" a new piece of work, an occasion on which his scissors were in requisition. These scissors, owing to an especial warning of Dolly's, had been kept carefully out of Eppie's reach; but the click of them had had a peculiar attraction for her ear, and, watching the results of that click, she had derived the philosophic lesson that the same cause would produce the same effect. Silas had seated himself in his loom, and the noise of weaving had begun; but he had left his scissors on

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT.

a ledge which Eppie's arm was long enough to reach; and now, like a small mouse, watching her opportunity, she stole quietly from her corner, secured the scissors, and toddled to the bed again, setting up her back as a mode of concealing the fact. She had a distinct intention as to the use of the scissors; and having cut the linen strip in a jagged but effectual manner, in two moments she had run out at the open door, where the sunshine was inviting her, while poor Silas believed her to be a better child than usual. It was not until he happened to need his scissors that the terrible fact burst upon him: Eppie had run out by herself—had perhaps fallen into the Stone-pit. Silas, shaken by the worst fear that could have befallen him, rushed out, calling "Eppie!" and ran eagerly about the unenclosed space, exploring the dry cavities into which she might have fallen, and then gazing with questioning dread at the smooth red surface of the water. The cold drops stood on his brow. How long had she been out? There was one hope—that she had crept through the stile and got into the fields, where he habitually took her to stroll. The meadow was searched in vain; and he got over the stile into the next field, looking with dying hope toward a small pond which was now reduced to its summer shallowness, so as to leave a wide margin of good adhesive mud. Here, however, sat Eppie, discoursing cheerfully to her own small boot, which she was using as a bucket to convey the water into a deep hoof-mark, while her little naked foot was planted comfortably on a cushion of olive-green mud. A red-headed calf was observing her with alarmed doubt through the opposite hedge.

Here was clearly a case of aberration in a christened child which demanded severe treatment; but Silas, overcome with convulsive joy at finding his treasure again, could do nothing but snatch her up and cover her with half-sobbing kisses.

EPPIE

It was not until he had carried her home, and had begun to think of the necessary washing, that he recollect ed the need that he should punish Eppie, and "make her remember." The idea that she might run away again and come to harm gave him unusual resolution, and for the first time he determined to try the coal-hole—a small closet near the hearth.

"Naughty, naughty Eppie," he suddenly began, holding her on his knee, and pointing to her muddy feet and clothes—"Naughty to cut with the scissors and run away. Eppie must go into the coal-hole for being naughty. Daddy must put her in the coal-hole."

He half-expected that this would be shock enough and that Eppie would begin to cry. But instead of that she began to shake herself on his knee, as if the proposition opened a pleasing novelty. Seeing that he must proceed to extremities, he put her into the coal-hole and held the door closed, with a trembling sense that he was using a strong measure. For a moment there was silence, but then came a little cry, "Opy, opy!" and Silas let her out again, saying, "Now Eppie 'ull never be naughty again, else she must go in the coal-hole—a black naughty place."

The weaving must stand still a long while this morning, for now Eppie must be washed, and have clean clothes on; but it was to be hoped that this punishment would have a lasting effect, and save time in future—though, perhaps, it would have been better if Eppie had cried more.

In half an hour she was clean again, and Silas, having turned his back to see what he could do with the linen band, threw it down again, with the reflection that Eppie would be good without fastening for the rest of the morning. He turned round again, and was going to place her in her little chair near the loom, when she peeped out at him with black face and hands again, and said, "Eppie in de toal-hole!"

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

This total failure of the coal-hole discipline shook Silas's belief in the efficacy of punishment. "She'd take it all for fun," he observed to Dolly, "if I didn't hurt her, and that I can't do, Mrs. Winthrop. If she makes me a bit o' trouble, I can bear it. And she's got no tricks but what she'll grow out of."

"Well, that's partly true, Master Marner," said Dolly, sympathetically; "and if you can't bring your mind to frighten her off touching things, you must do what you can to keep 'em out of her way."

So Eppie was reared without punishment, the burden of her misdeeds being borne vicariously by father Silas. The stone hut was made a soft nest for her, lined with downy patience; and also in the world that lay beyond the stone hut she knew nothing of frowns and denials.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of carrying her and his yarn or linen at the same time, Silas took her with him in most of his journeys to the farm houses, unwilling to leave her behind at Dolly Winthrop's, who was always ready to take care of her; and little curly-headed Eppie, the weaver's child, became an object of interest at several outlying homesteads, as well as in the village. Hitherto Silas had been treated very much as if he had been a useful gnome or brownie—a queer and unaccountable creature, with whom one would be glad to make all greetings and bargains as brief as possible, but must be dealt with in a propitiatory way, and occasionally have a present of pork or garden-stuff to carry home with him, seeing that without him there was no getting the yarn woven. But now he was met with open, smiling faces and cheerful questioning, as a person whose satisfactions and difficulties could be understood. Everywhere he must sit a little and talk about the child, and words of interest were

EPPIE

always ready for him: "Ah, Master Marner, you'll be lucky if she takes the measles soon and easy!"—or, "Why, there isn't many lone men 'ud ha' been wishing to take up with a little un like that: but I reckon the weaving makes you handier than men as do outdoor work—you're partly as handy as a woman, for weaving comes next to spinning." Elderly masters and mistresses, seated observantly in large kitchen armchairs, shook their heads over the difficulties attendant on rearing children, felt Eppie's round arms and legs, and pronounced them remarkably firm, and told Silas that, if she turned out well (which, however, there was no telling), it would be a fine thing for him to have a steady lass to do for him when he got helpless. Servant maidens were fond of carrying her out to look at the hens and chickens, or to see if any cherries could be shaken down in the orchard; and the small boys and girls approached her slowly, with cautious movement and steady gaze, like little dogs face to face with one of their own kind, till attraction had reached the point at which the soft lips were put out for a kiss. No child was afraid of approaching Silas when Eppie was near him: there was love between him and the child that blent them into one, and there was love between the child and the world.

Silas began now to think of Raveloe life entirely in relation to Eppie: she must have everything that was good in Raveloe; and he listened docilely, that he might come to understand better what this life was, from which, for fifteen years, he had stood aloof, as some man who has a precious plant to which he would give a nurturing home in a new soil thinks of the rain, and the sunshine, and all influences, in relation to his nursling, and asks industriously for all knowledge that will help him to satisfy the wants of the searching roots, or to guard leaf and bud from the invading

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

harm. The disposition to hoard had been utterly crushed at the very first by the loss of his long-stored gold: the coins he earned afterward seemed as irrelevant as stones brought to complete a house suddenly buried by an earthquake; the sense of bereavement was too heavy upon him for the old thrill of satisfaction to arise again at the touch of the newly earned coin. And now something had come to replace his hoard which gave a growing purpose to the earnings, drawing his hope and joy continually onward beyond the money.

It was a bright autumn Sunday, sixteen years after Silas Marner had found his new treasure on the hearth. The bells of the old Raveloe church were ringing the cheerful peal which told that morning service was ended; and out of the arched doorway in the tower came slowly, retarded by friendly greetings and questions, the richer parishioners who had chosen this bright Sunday morning as eligible for church-going. It was the rural fashion of that time for the more important members of the congregation to depart first, while their humbler neighbours waited and looked on, stroking their bent heads or dropping their curtsies to any large rate-payer who turned to notice them.

It is impossible to mistake Silas Marner. His large brown eyes seem to have gathered a longer vision, as is the way with eyes that have been short-sighted in early life, and they have a less vague, a more answering gaze; but in everything else one sees signs of a frame much enfeebled by the lapse of the sixteen years. The weaver's bent shoulders and white hair gave him almost the look of advanced age, though he is not more than five and fifty; but there is the freshest blossom of youth close by his side—a blonde, dimpled girl of eighteen, who had vainly tried to chastise her curly auburn hair into smoothness under her brown bonnet: the hair

EPPIE

ripples as obstinately as a brooklet under the March breeze, and the little ringlets burst away from the restraining comb behind and show themselves below the bonnet-crown. Eppie cannot help being rather vexed about her hair, for there is no other girl in Raveloe who has hair at all like it, and she thinks hair ought to be smooth. She does not like to be blameworthy even in small things: you see how neatly her prayer-book is folded in her spotted handkerchief.

That good-looking young fellow in a new suit, who walks behind her, thinks that perhaps straight hair is the best in general, but he doesn't want Eppie's hair to be different. She divines that there is some one behind her who is mustering courage to come to her side as soon as they are out in the lane, else why should she look rather shy, and take care not to turn her head from her father Silas.

"I wish we had a little garden, father, with double daisies in, like Mrs. Winthrop's," said Eppie, when they were out in the lane, "only they say it 'ud take a deal of digging and bringing fresh soil—and you couldn't do that, could you, father? Anyhow, I shouldn't like you to do it, for it 'ud be too hard work for you."

"Yes, I could do it, child, if you want a bit o' garden: these long evenings, I could work at taking in a little bit o' the waste, just enough for a root or two o' flowers for you; and again, i' the morning, I could have a turn wi' the spade before I sat down to the loom. Why didn't you tell me before as you wanted a bit o' garden?"

"I can dig it for you, Master Marner," eagerly said the young man, who was now by Eppie's side. "It'll be play to me after I've done my day's work, or any odd bits o' time when the work's slack."

"Eh, Aaron, my lad, are you there?" said Silas. "I

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

wasn't aware of you; for when Eppie's talking o' things, I see nothing but what she's a-saying. Well, if you could help me with the digging, we might get her a bit o' garden all the sooner."

"Then, if you think well and good," said Aaron, "I'll come to the Stone-pits this afternoon, and we'll settle what land's to be taken in, and I'll get up an hour earlier i' the morning and begin on it."

"But not if you don't promise me not to work at the hard digging, father," said Eppie. "For I shouldn't ha' said anything about it," she said, half bashfully, half-roguishly, "only Mrs. Winthrop said as Aaron 'ud be so good, and——"

"And you might ha' known it without mother telling you," said Aaron. "And Master Marner knows too, I hope, as I'm able and willing to do a turn o' work for him, and he won't do me the unkindness to anyways take it out o' my hands."

"There, now, father, you won't work in it till it's all easy," said Eppie, "and you and me can mark out the beds, and make holes and plant the roots. It'll be a deal livelier at the Stone-pits when we've got some flowers, for I always think the flowers can see us and know what we're talking about. And I'll have a bit o' rosemary, and bergamot, and thyme, because they're so sweet-smelling; but there's no lavender, only in the gentlefolks' gardens, I think."

"That's no reason why you shouldn't have some," said Aaron, "for I can bring you slips of anything; I'm forced to cut no end of 'em when I'm gardening, and throw 'em away, mostly. There's a big bed o' lavender at the Red House: the missis is very fond of it."

"Well," said Silas, gravely, "so as you don't make free for us, or ask for anything as is worth much at the Red

EPPIE

House: for Mr. Cass's been so good to us, and built us up the new end o' the cottage, and given us beds and things, as I couldn't abide to be imposin' for garden-stuff or anything else."

"No, no, there's no imposin'," said Aaron; "there's never a garden in all the parish but what there's endless waste in it for want o' somebody as could use everything up. But I must go back now, else Mother 'ull be in trouble as I arn't there."

Aaron turned back to the village, while Silas and Eppie went on up the lonely sheltered lane.

"Oh, Daddy!" she began, when they were in privacy, clasping and squeezing Silas's arm and skipping around to give him an energetic kiss. "My little old daddy! I'm so glad! I don't think I shall want anything else when we've got a little garden; and I knew Aaron would dig it for us," she went on with roguish triumph—"I knew that very well."

"You're a deep little puss, you are," said Silas, with the mild passive happiness of love-crowned age in his face; "but you'll make yourself fine and beholden to Aaron."

"Oh, no, I sha'n't," said Eppie, laughing and frisking; "he likes it."

"Come, come, let me carry your prayer-book, else you'll be dropping it, jumping that way."

Eppie was now aware that her behaviour was under observation, but it was only the observation of a friendly donkey, browsing with a log fastened to his foot, whom Eppie gratified with scratching his nose as usual, though this was attended with the inconvenience of his following them, up to the very door of their home.

But the sound of a sharp bark inside as Eppie put the key into the door modified the donkey's views, and he limped

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

away again without bidding. The bark was the sign of an excited welcome awaiting them from a knowing brown terrier, who, after dancing at their legs in a hysterical manner, rushed with a worrying noise at a tortoise-shell kitten under the loom, while the lady mother of the kitten sat sunning herself in the window.

Silas sat down and watched Eppie with a satisfied gaze as she spread the clean cloth, and set on it the potatoe-pie, warmed up slowly, in a safe Sunday fashion, by being put into a dry pot over a slowly dying fire, as the best substitute for an oven. For Silas would not consent to have an oven added to his conveniences: he loved the old brick hearth as he had loved his brown pot—and was it not there when he had found Eppie?

He ate his dinner more silently than usual, soon laying down his knife and fork, and watching, half abstractedly, Eppie's play with Snap and the cat, by which her own dining was made rather a lengthy business. Yet it was a sight that might well arrest wandering thoughts; Eppie, with the rippling radiance of her hair and the whiteness of her rounded chin and throat set off by the dark blue cotton gown, laughing merrily as the kitten held on with her four claws to one shoulder, while Snap on the right hand and puss on the other put up their paws toward a morsel which she held out of the reach of both—till she relented, caressed them both, and divided the morsel between them.

But at last Eppie, glancing at the clock, checked the play and said, "Oh, Daddy, you're wanting to go into the sunshine to smoke your pipe. But I must clear away first; I won't be long."

Silas had taken to smoking a pipe daily, having been strongly urged to it by the sages of Raveloe. He did not highly enjoy smoking, and often wondered how his neigh-

EPPIE

bours could be so fond of it: but a humble sort of acquiescence in what was held to be good, had become a strong habit of that new self which had been developed in him since he had found Eppie on his hearth. By seeking what was needful for her, by sharing the effect that everything produced on her, he had himself come to appropriate the forms of custom and belief which were the mould of Raveloe life. The sense of presiding goodness and the human trust which come with all pure peace and joy had given him a dim impression that there had been some error, some mistake, which had thrown that dark shadow over the days of his best years; and as it grew more and more easy to him to open his mind to Dolly Winthrop, he gradually told her a large part of his past history, receiving from her in return that part of her creed which was expressed in a simple loving faith in Divine love.

This was during Eppie's earlier years, when Silas had to part with her for two hours every day that she might learn to read at the Dame school, after he had vainly tried himself to guide her in that first step of learning. Now that she was grown up, Silas had often been led to talk with her, too, of the past, and how and why he had lived a lonely man until she had been sent to him. For it would have been impossible for him to hide from Eppie that she was not his own child. Even if the most delicate reticence on the point could have been expected from Raveloe gossips in her presence, her own questions about her mother could not have been parried as she grew up.

So Eppie had long known how her mother had died on the snowy ground, and how she herself had been found on the hearth by father Silas, who had taken her golden curls for his lost guineas come back to him. Her knowledge of Mrs. Winthrop, who was her nearest friend next to Silas,

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

made her feel that a mother must be very precious, and she had again and again asked Silas how he had found her mother against the furze-bush, led toward it by the little footsteps and the outstretched arms. The furze-bush was there still; and this afternoon, when Eppie came out with Silas into the sunshine, it was the first object that arrested her eyes and thoughts.

"Father," she said, in a tone of gentle gravity, which sometimes came across her playfulness, "we shall take the furze-bush into the garden; it'll come into the corner, and just against it I'll put snowdrops and crocuses, 'cause Aaron says they won't die out, but'll always get more and more."

"Ah, child," said Silas, always ready to talk when he had his pipe in his hand, apparently enjoying the pauses more than the puffs, "it wouldn't do to leave out the fruze-bush; and there's nothing prettier, to my thinking, when it's yellow with flowers. But it's just come into my head what we're to do for a fence. Mayhap Aaron can help us to a thought; but a fence we must have, else the donkeys and things 'ull come and trample everything down. And fencing's hard to be got at, by what I can make out."

"Oh, I'll tell you, Daddy," said Eppie, clasping her hands suddenly, after a minute's thought. "There's lots o' loose stones about, and we might lay 'em atop of one another, an' make a wall. You and me could carry the smallest, and Aaron 'ud carry the rest—I know he would."

"Eh, my precious un," said Silas, "there isn't enough stones to go all round; and as for you carrying, why, wi' your little arms you couldn't carry a stone no bigger than a turnip. You're dilicate made, my dear," he added, with a tender intonation—"that's what Mrs. Winthrop says."

"Oh, I'm stronger than you think, Daddy," said Eppie,

EPPIE

"and if there wasn't stones enough to go all round, why, they'll go part o' the way, and then it'll be easier to get sticks and things for the rest. See here, round the big pit, what a many stones!"

She skipped forward to the pit, meaning to lift one of the stones and exhibit her strength, but she started back in surprise.

"Oh, father, just come and look here," she exclaimed—"come and see how the water's gone down since yesterday. Why, yesterday the pit was ever so full!"

"Well, to be sure," said Silas, coming to her side. "Why, that's the draining they've begun on, since harvest, I reckon. The foreman said to me the other day, when I passed by 'em, 'Master Marner,' said he, 'I shouldn't wonder if we lay your bit o' waste as dry as a bone.'"

"How odd it'll seem to have the old pit dried up," said Eppie, turning away, and stooping to lift rather a large stone. "See, Daddy, I can carry this quite well," she added, going along with much energy for a few steps, but presently letting it fall.

"Ah, you're fine and strong, aren't you?" said Silas, while Eppie shook her aching arms and laughed. "Come, come, let us go and sit down on the bank against the stile there, and have no more lifting. You might hurt yourself, child. You'd need have somebody to work for you—and my arm isn't over-strong."

Silas uttered the last sentence slowly, as if it implied more than met the ear; and Eppie, when they sat down on the bank, nestled close to his side, and, taking hold caressingly of the arm that was not over-strong, held it on her lap, while Silas puffed again dutifully at the pipe, which occupied his other arm. An ash in the hedgerow behind made a fretted screen from the sun, and threw happy, playful shadows all

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

about them, and little did they dream in that peaceful hour that presently the entire village would be aroused to a pitch of intense excitement on their account.

Later in the afternoon in the stone pit now gone dry was found Silas Marner's long-lost gold. And by its side, wedged between two stones, was found the skeleton of the man who had stolen the gold and then had fallen into the pit with it, sixteen years before. From his watch and seals, and from his gold-handled hunting whip, it was proved that the skeleton was that of Godfrey Cass's brother, Dunstan, who had mysteriously disappeared also sixteen years before.

Between eight and nine o'clock that evening Eppie and Silas were seated alone in the cottage. After the great excitement the weaver had undergone from the events of the afternoon, he had felt a longing for this quietude, and had even begged Mrs. Winthrop and Aaron, who had naturally lingered behind every one else, to leave him alone with his child.

Silas's face showed a sort of transfiguration as he sat in his arm-chair and looked at Eppie. She had drawn her own chair toward his knees, and leaned forward, holding both his hands while she looked up at him. On the table near them, lit by a candle, lay the recovered gold—the old long-loved gold, ranged in orderly heaps, as Silas used to range it in the days when it was his only joy. He had been telling her how he used to count it every night, and how his soul was utterly desolate till she was sent to him.

"At first, I'd a sort o' feeling come across me now and then," he was saying in a subdued tone, "as if you might be changed into the gold again; for sometimes, turn my head which way I would, I seemed to see the gold; and I thought I should be glad if I could feel it, and find it was come

EPPIE

back. But that didn't last long. After a bit, I should have thought it was a curse come again, if it had drove you from me, for I'd got to feel the need o' your looks and your voice and the touch o' your little fingers. You didn't know then, Eppie, when you were such a little un—you didn't know what your old father Silas felt for you."

"But I know now, father," said Eppie. "If it hadn't been for you, they'd have taken me to the workhouse, and there'd have been nobody to love me."

"Eh, my precious child, the blessing was mine. If you hadn't been sent to save me, I should ha' gone to the grave in my misery. The money was taken away from me in time; and you see it's been kept—kept till it was wanted for you. It's wonderful—our life is wonderful."

Silas sat in silence a few minutes, looking at the money. "It takes no hold of me now," he said, ponderingly—"the money doesn't. I wonder if it ever could again. I doubt it might, if I lost you, Eppie. I might come to think I was forsaken again, and lose the feeling that God was good to me."

At that moment there was a knocking at the door and Eppie was obliged to rise without answering Silas. Beautiful she looked, with the tenderness of gathering tears in her eyes and a slight flush on her cheeks, as she opened the door and saw Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass from the Red House, who had come to add to the events of that great day. After Eppie had made her little rustic curtsy, and the guests had taken the chairs which Eppie had placed for them, they made known the object of their visit.

This was no other than the desire to take Eppie and provide for her as their own child, one of the reasons for which desire was the idea that this might in some measure help to atone for Dunstan Cass's crime toward Silas Marner.

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

When the proposition was made, Silas trembled violently; then after a moment of silence he said faintly:

"Eppie, my child, speak. I won't stand in your way. Thank Mr. and Mrs. Cass."

Eppie took her hand from her father's head, and came forward a step. Her cheeks were flushed, but not with shyness this time. The sense that her father was in doubt and suffering banished self-consciousness. She dropped a curtsy and said:

"Thank you, ma'am—thank you, sir. But I can't leave my father, nor own anybody nearer than him. And I don't want to be a lady—thank you all the same." (Here Eppie dropped another curtsy.) "I couldn't give up the folks I've been used to."

Eppie's lip began to tremble a little at the last words. She retreated to her father's chair again and held him round the neck: while Silas, with a subdued sob, put up his hand to grasp hers. Presently Eppie came forward again and curtsied as she had done before, in answer to their persistent appeals that she should change her mind. She grasped Silas's hand firmly while she spoke with colder decision than before.

"Thank you, ma'am—thank you, sir, for your offers—they're very great, and far above my wish. For I should have no delight i' life any more if I was forced to go away from my father, and knew that he was sitting at home, a-thinking of me and feeling lone. We've been used to be happy together every day, and I can't think of no happiness without him. And he says he'd nobody i' th' world till I was sent to him, and he'd have nothing when I was gone. And he's took care of me and loved me from the first, and I'll cleave to him as long as he lives, and nobody shall ever come between him and me."

EPPIE

The clear, girlish voice was sweet and strong with decision, the beautiful eyes flashed with a depth of determination which even Silas had never seen in them before, and as they rested tenderly upon Silas's meeker ones, the love which answered her glance was reward enough for Eppie.

"I'll cleave to him as long as he lives, and nobody shall ever come between him and me,"—she had said,—and winsome little Eppie never regretted her choice.

THE GARTHS



George Goodwin
1952

THE GARTHS.

THE GARTHS

THE Garth family, which was rather a large one, for Mary, the oldest daughter, had four brothers and one sister, was an easy-going, happy family, despite the small income on which they lived, and the few glimpses we have of them reveal the fact that it is not always money which brings the greatest happiness. The Garths were very fond of their old house, a homely place a little way outside a town, with an orchard in front of it; a rambling old-fashioned half-timbered building, which before the town had spread had been a farmhouse, but was now surrounded with the private gardens of the townsmen. All the children who were friends of the Garths were fond of the old house too, and Fred Vincy, Mary's particular friend, was especially devoted to it, knowing it by heart, even to the attic, which smelt deliciously of apples and quinces.

One afternoon Fred rode out from town on horseback and found Mrs. Garth in the kitchen, busier than usual, for she was carrying on several occupations at once—making her pies, observing the house-maid's movements through an open door, and giving lessons to her youngest boy and girl, who were standing opposite to her at the table with their books and slates before them. A tub and a clothes-horse at the other end of the kitchen indicated an intermittent wash of small things also going on.

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

Mrs. Garth, with her sleeves turned above her elbows, deftly handling her pastry—applying her rolling pin and giving ornamental pinches, while she expounded with grammatical fervour what were the right views about the concord of verbs and pronouns, with “nouns of multitude or signifying many”—was a sight agreeably amusing. She was of the same curly-haired, square-faced type as Mary, but handsomer, with more delicacy of feature, a pale skin, and a remarkable firmness of glance.

“Now let us go through that once more,” said Mrs. Garth, pinching an apple puff which seemed to distract Ben from due attention to the lesson. “‘Not without regard to the import of the word as conveying unity or plurality of idea’—tell me again what that means, Ben.”

(Mrs. Garth, like more celebrated educators, had her favourite ancient paths, and in a general wreck of society would have tried to hold her “Lindley Murray” above the waves.)

“Oh—it means—you must think what you mean,” said Ben, rather peevishly. “I hate grammar. What’s the use of it?”

“To teach you to speak and write correctly, so that you can be understood,” said Mrs. Garth, with severe precision. “Should you like to speak as old Job does?”

“Yes,” said Ben, stoutly; “it’s funnier. He says, ‘Yoo goo’—that’s just as good as ‘You go.’”

“But he says, ‘A ship’s in the garden,’ instead of ‘A sheep,’” said Letty, with an air of superiority. “You might think he meant a ship off the sea.”

“No, you mightn’t, if you weren’t silly,” said Ben. “How could a ship off the sea come there?”

“These things belong only to pronunciation, which is the least part of grammar,” said Mrs. Garth. “That apple-

THE GARTHS

peel is to be eaten by the pigs, Ben; if you eat it, I must give them your piece of pasty. Job has only to speak about very plain things. How do you think you would write or speak about anything more difficult, if you knew no more of grammar than he does? You would use wrong words, and put words in the wrong places, and instead of making people understand you, they would turn away from you as a tiresome person. What would you do then?"

"I shouldn't care, I should leave off," said Ben, with a sense that this was an agreeable issue where grammar was concerned.

"I see you are getting tired and stupid, Ben," said Mrs. Garth, accustomed to these obstructive arguments from her male offspring. Having finished her pies, she moved toward the clothes-horse, and said, "Come here and tell me the story I told you on Wednesday, about Cincinnatus."

"I know, he was a farmer," said Ben.

"Now, Ben, he was a Roman—let me tell," said Letty, using her elbow contentiously.

"You silly thing, he was a Roman farmer, and he was ploughing."

"Yes, but before that—that didn't come first—people wanted him," said Letty.

"Well, but you must say what sort of a man he was first," insisted Ben. "He was a wise man, like my father, and that made the people want his advice. And he was a brave man, and could fight. And so could my father—couldn't he, mother?"

"Now, Ben, let me tell the story straight on, as mother told it us," said Letty, frowning. "Please, mother, tell Ben not to speak."

"Letty, I am ashamed of you," said her mother, wringing out the caps from the tub. "When your brother began, you

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

ought to have waited to see if he could not tell the story. How rude you look, pushing and frowning, as if you wanted to conquer with your elbows! Cincinnatus, I am sure, would have been sorry to see his daughter behave so." (Mrs. Garth delivered this awful sentence with much majesty of enunciation, and Letty felt that between repressed volubility and general disesteem, that of the Romans inclusive, life was already a painful affair.) "Now then, Ben."

"Well—of—well, why, there was a great deal of fighting, and they were all blockheads, and—I can't tell it just as you told it—but they wanted a man to be captain and king and everything——"

"Dictator," said Letty, with injured looks, and not without a wish to make her mother repent.

"Very well, dictator!" said Ben, contemptuously. "But that isn't a good word: he didn't tell them to write on slates."

"Come, come, Ben, you are not so ignorant as that," said Mrs. Garth, carefully serious. "Hark, there is a knock at the door! Run, Letty, and open it."

The knock was Fred's, who was greeted with great joy by Mrs. Garth's pupils.

"We needn't go on about Cincinnatus, need we?" said Ben, who had taken Fred's whip out of his hand, and was trying its efficiency on the cat.

"No, go out now, but put that whip down. How very mean of you to tease poor old Tortoise! Pray take the whip from him, Fred."

"Will you let me ride on your horse to-day?" asked Ben, rendering up the whip with an air of not being obliged to do it.

"Not to-day—another time. I am not riding my own horse," said Fred.

THE GARTHS

"Enough, enough, Ben! run away!" said Mrs. Garth, and Ben reluctantly obeyed, followed by Letty.

"Are Letty and Ben your only pupils now, Mrs. Garth?" asked Fred when the children were gone.

"I have one other; only one. Fanny Hackbutt comes at half past eleven. I'm not getting a great income now," said Mrs. Garth, smiling, "but I've saved my little purse for Alfred's premium: I have ninety-two pounds. He can go to Mr. Hanmer's now, he is just at the right age."

At that moment Mr. Garth came in and the conversation branched off in other directions.

The next time we see the Garths they are grouped around the breakfast table in the large parlour where maps and desks were; father, mother, and five of the children. Mary, who had been away, but was just now at home waiting for a situation, while Christy, the boy next to her, was getting cheap learning and cheap fare in Scotland, having to his father's disappointment taken to books instead of to business.

The letters, nine of them, had just come, and Mr. Garth was forgetting his tea and toast while he read his, not neglecting to cut off a large red seal from one for Letty, who snatched it up like an eager terrier.

Two of the nine letters had been for Mary. After reading them she had passed them to her mother, and sat playing with her teaspoon absently, till with a sudden recollection she returned to her sewing, which she had kept on her lap during breakfast.

"Oh, don't sew, Mary!" said Ben, pulling her arm down. "Make me a peacock with this bread crumb." He had been kneading a small mass for the purpose.

"No, no, Mischief!" said Mary, good humouredly, while she pricked his hand lightly with her needle. "Try and

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

mould it yourself; you have seen me do it often enough. I must get this sewing done."

"Have you made up your mind, my dear," said Mrs. Garth, laying the letters down.

"I shall go to the school at York," said Mary. "I am less unfit to teach in a school than in a family. I like to teach classes best."

"It must be very stupid to be always in a girls' school," said Alfred. "Such a set of nincompoops, like Mrs. Ballard's pupils walking two and two."

"And they have no games worth playing at," said Jim. "They can neither throw nor leap. I don't wonder at Mary's not liking it."

"What is that Mary doesn't like, eh?" said the father, looking over his spectacles and pausing before he opened his next letter.

"Being among a lot of nincompoop girls," said Alfred.

"Is it the situation you had heard of, Mary?" asked Caleb, gently, looking at his daughter.

"Yes, father: the school at York. I have determined to take it. It is quite the best. Thirty-five pounds a year, and extra pay for teaching the smallest strummers at the piano."

"Poor child! I wish she could stay at home with us, Susan," said Garth, looking plaintively at his wife.

"Mary would not be happy without doing her duty," said Mrs. Garth, magisterially, conscious of having done her own.

"It wouldn't make me happy to do such a nasty duty as that," said Alfred—at which Mary and her father laughed silently, but Mrs. Garth said, gravely:

"Do find a fitter word than nasty, my dear Alfred, for everything that you think disagreeable. And suppose that

THE GARTHS

Mary could help you to go to Mr. Hanmer's with the money she gets?"

"That seems to me a great shame. But she's an old brick," said Alfred, rising from his chair, and pulling Mary's head backward to kiss her.

Mary coloured and laughed, but could not conceal that the tears were coming. Caleb, looking on over his spectacles, with the angles of his eyebrows falling, had an expression of mingled delight and sorrow, as he returned to the opening of his last letter; and even Mrs. Garth, her lips curling with a calm contentment, allowed that inappropriate language to pass without correction, although Ben immediately took it up, and sang, "She's an old brick, old brick, old brick!" to a cantering measure, which he beat out with his fist on Mary's arm.

But Mrs. Garth's eyes were now drawn toward her husband's face, while he read his letter, for she saw there an expression of grave surprise which alarmed her until she saw him suddenly shaken by a little joyous laugh as he turned back to the beginning of the letter, and looking at her above his spectacles said in a low tone, "What do you think, Susan?"

Then she went and stood behind him, putting her hand on his shoulder while they read the letter together. It contained an offer of the agency for some estates lying near by; a position which he had once creditably filled for a number of years.

"Here is an honour to your father, children," said Mrs. Garth, looking round at the five pairs of eyes all fixed on the parents. "He is asked to take a post again by those who dismissed him long ago. That shows that he did his work well, so that they feel the want of him."

"Like Cincinnatus—hooray!" said Ben, riding on his

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

chair, with a pleasant confidence that discipline was relaxed.

"Will they come to fetch him, mother?" said Letty, thinking of the Mayor and Corporation in their robes.

Mrs. Garth patted Letty's head and smiled, but seeing that her husband was gathering up his letters and likely soon to be out of reach, in that sanctuary "business," she pressed his shoulders and said emphatically:

"Now, mind you ask fair pay, Caleb."

"Oh, yes," said Caleb, in a deep voice of assent, as if it would be unreasonable to suppose anything else of him. "It'll come to between four and five hundred, the two together." Then with a little start of remembrance he said, "Mary, write and give up that school. Stay and help your mother. I'm as pleased as Punch, now I've thought of that."

No manner could have been less like that of Punch triumphant than Caleb's, but his talents did not lie in finding phrases, though he was very particular about his letter-writing, and regarded his wife as a treasury of correct language.

There was almost an uproar among the children now, and Mary held up the cambric embroidery toward her mother entreatingly, that it might be put out of reach while the boys dragged her into a dance. Mrs. Garth, in placid joy, began to put the cups and plates together, while Caleb pushing his chair from the table still sat holding his letters in his hand and meditating. At last he laid them down, thrust his fingers between the buttons of his waistcoat and sat upright, saying, with some awe in his voice, and moving his head slowly aside—"It's a great gift of God, Susan."

"That it is, Caleb," said his wife, with answering fervour. "And it will be a blessing to your children to have had a father who did such work: a father whose good work re-

THE GARTHS

mains, though his name may be forgotten." She could not say any more to him then about the pay. There was no question about it; the Garths were a very happy family that day.

The only other time when we catch a glimpse of them together is on a summer afternoon later, when Fred Vincy had gone to call on them, as he frequently did. He found the family group, dogs and cats included, under the great apple tree in the orchard. It was a festival with Mrs. Garth, for Christy, her peculiar joy and pride, had come home for a short holiday from his tutoring. He was lying on the ground now by his mother's chair, with his straw hat laid flat over his eyes, while Jim on the other side was reading aloud from "*Ivanhoe*." He was in the great archery scene at the tournament, but suffered much interruption from Ben, who had fetched his own old bow and arrows and was making himself very disagreeable, Letty thought, by begging all present to observe his random shots, which no one wished to do except Brownie, the active-minded but probably shallow mongrel, while the grizzled Newfoundland lying in the sun looked on with the dull-eyed neutrality of extreme old age. Letty herself, showing as to her mouth and pinafore some slight signs that she had been assisting at the gathering of the cherries which stood in a coral heap on the tea-table, was seated on the grass, listening open-eyed to the reading, when the centre of interest was changed for all by the arrival of Fred Vincy.

Seating himself on a garden-stool, with the children gathered round him, he began to talk about a matter which was of extreme importance to him, with Mrs. Garth, when they were interrupted by a sudden rush under the apple tree where the tea things stood. Ben, bouncing

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

across the grass with Brownie at his heels, and seeing the kitten drag some knitting by a lengthening line of wool, shouted and clapped his hands; Brownie barked, the kitten, desperate, jumped on the tea-table and upset the milk, then jumped down again and swept half the cherries with it; and Ben, snatching up the half-knitted sock-top, fitted it over the kitten's head as a new source of madness, while Letty, arriving from the garden, cried out to her mother against this cruelty—it was a history as full of sensation as "This is the house that Jack built." Mrs. Garth was obliged to interfere, the other young ones came up, and the *tête-à-tête* with Fred was ended.

Truly the Garths were an easy-going, happy family, and these few pictures we have of life in their home circle make even those of us who are rich and famous sigh for vanished youth and gaiety.

LITTLE LIZZIE

LITTLE LIZZIE

THE large bow-window of Mrs. Jerome's parlour was open, and that lady herself was seated within its ample semicircle, having a table before her on which her best tea-tray, her best china, and her best urn rug had been standing in readiness for half an hour. Mrs. Jerome's best tea service was of delicate white fluted china, with gold sprigs upon it—as pretty a tea service as you need wish to see. Mrs. Jerome was like her china, handsome and old-fashioned. She was a buxom lady of sixty, in an elaborate lace cap fastened by a frill under her chin, and with a snowy neckkerchief exhibiting its ample folds as far as her waist, and a stiff grey silk gown. She had a clean damask napkin pinned before her to guard her dress during the process of tea-making; her favourite geraniums in the bow-window were looking as healthy as she could desire; her own handsome portrait, painted when she was twenty years younger, was smiling down on her with agreeable flattery; and altogether, she seemed to be in as peaceful and pleasant a position as a buxom, well-dressed elderly lady need desire. But, as in so many other cases, appearances were deceptive. Her mind was greatly perturbed, and her temper ruffled by the fact that it was more than a quarter past five, even by the losing timepiece—that it was half-past by her large gold watch, which she held in her hand, as if she were counting the pulse of the after-

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

noon—and that, by the kitchen clock, which she felt sure was not an hour too fast, it had already struck six. The lapse of time was rendered the more unendurable to Mrs. Jerome by her wonder that Mr. Jerome could stay out in the garden with Lizzie in that thoughtless way, taking it so easily that tea-time was long past, and that, after all the trouble of getting down the best tea-things, Rev. Mr. Tryan, the expected guest, would not come.

Finally Mrs. Jerome felt that the present lingering pace of things, united with Mr. Jerome's absence, was not to be borne any longer. So she rang the bell for Sally.

"Goodness me, Sally! go into the garden an' see after your master. Tell him it's goin' on for six, an' Mr. Tryan 'ull niver think o' comin' now, an' it's time we got tea over. An' he's lettin' Lizzie stain her frock, I expect, among them strawberry-beds. Make her come in this minute."

No wonder Mr. Jerome was tempted to linger in the garden, for though the house was pretty, and well deserved its name,—“the White House,”—the tall damask roses that clustered over the porch being thrown into relief by rough stucco of the most brilliant white, yet the garden and orchards were Mr. Jerome's glory, as well they might be; and there was nothing in which he had a more innocent pride—peace to a good man's memory! all his pride was innocent—than in conducting a hitherto uninitiated visitor over his grounds, and making him in some degree aware of the incomparable advantages possessed by the inhabitants of the White House in the matter of red-streaked apples, russets, northern greens (excellent for baking), swan-egg pears, and early vegetables, to say nothing of flowering shrubs, pink hawthornes, lavender bushes, more than ever Mrs. Jerome could use; and, in short, a superabundance of everything that a person retired from business could desire

LITTLE LIZZIE

to possess himself, or to share with his friends. The garden was one of those old-fashioned paradises which hardly exist any longer, except as memories of our childhood; no finical separation between flower and kitchen garden there; no monotony of enjoyment for one sense to the exclusion of another; but a charming paradisiacal mingling of all that was pleasant to the eyes and good for food. The rich flower-border running along every walk, with its endless succession of spring flowers, anemones, auriculas, wall-flowers, sweet-williams, campanulas, snapdragons, and tiger-lilies, had its taller beauties, such as moss and Provence roses, varied with espalier apple trees; the crimson of a carnation was carried out in the lurking crimson of the neighbouring strawberry-beds; you gathered a moss-rose one moment, and a bunch of currants the next; you were in a delicious fluctuation between the scent of jasmine and the juice of gooseberries. Then, what a high wall at one end, flanked by a summer-house so lofty, that, after ascending its long flight of steps, you could see perfectly well there was no view worth looking at; what alcoves and garden-seats in all directions; and along one side, what a hedge, tall, and firm, and unbroken, like a green wall!

It was near this hedge that Mr. Jerome was standing when Sally found him. He had set down the basket of strawberries on the gravel walk, and had lifted up little Lizzie in his arms to look at a bird's nest. Lizzie peeped, and then looked at her grandpa with round blue eyes, and then peeped again.

"D'ye see it, Lizzie?" he whispered.

"Yes," she whispered in return, putting her lips very near grandpa's face. At this moment Sally appeared.

"Eh, eh, Sally; what's the matter? Is Mr. Tryan come?"

"No, sir; an' Missis says she's sure he won't come now,

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

an' she wants you to come in an' hev tea. Dear heart, Miss Lizzie, you've stained your pinafore, an' I shouldn't wonder if it's gone through to your frock. There'll be fine work! Come along wi' me, do."

"Nay, nay, nay; we've done no harm, we've done no harm, hev we, Lizzie? The wash-tub 'll make all right again."

Sally, regarding the wash-tub from a different point of view, looked sourly serious, and hurried away with Lizzie, who trotted submissively along, her little head in eclipse under a large nankin bonnet, while Mr. Jerome followed leisurely with his large good-natured features and white locks shaded by a broad-brimmed hat.

"Mr. Jerome, I wonder at you!" said Mrs. Jerome, in a tone of indignant remonstrance, evidently sustained by a deep sense of injury, as her husband opened the parlour door. "When will you leave off invitin' people to meals an' not lettin' 'em know the time? I'll answer for't, you niver said a word to Mr. Tryan as we should take tea at five o'clock. It's just like you!"

"Nay, nay, Susan," answered her husband in a soothing tone; "there's nothin' amiss. I told Mr. Tryan as we took tea at five punctial; mayhap, summat's a-detainin' on him. He's a deal to do, an' to think on, remember."

"Why, it's struck six i' the kitchen a'ready. It's nonsense to look for him comin' now. So you may's well ring for th' urn. Now, Sally's got th' heater in the fire, we may's well hev th' urn in, though he doesn't come. I niver seed the like o' you, Mr. Jerome, for axin' people an' givin' me the trouble o' gettin' things down an' hevin' crumpets made, an' after all, they don't come. I shall hev to wash every one o' these tea-things myself, for there's no trustin' Sally —she'd break a fortin' i' crockery i' no time!"

LITTLE LIZZIE

"But why will you give yourself sich trouble, Susan? Our everyday tea-things would ha' done as well for Mr. Tryan; an' they're a deal convenienter to hold."

"Yes, that's just your way, Mr. Jerome; you're al'ys a-finding fault wi' my chany, because I bought it myself afore I was married. But let me tell you, I knowed how to choose chany if I didn't know how to choose a husband. An' where's Lizzie? You've niver left her i' the garden by herself, with her white frock on, an' clean stockin's?"

"Be easy, my dear Susan, be easy; Lizzie's come in wi' Sally. She's hevin' her pinafore took off, I'll be bound. Ah! there's Mr. Tryan a-comin' through the gate."

Mrs. Jerome began hastily to adjust her damask napkin and the expression of her countenance for the reception of the clergyman, and Mr. Jerome went out to meet his guest, whom he greeted outside the door.

"Mr. Tryan, how do you do, Mr. Tryan? Welcome to the White House! I'm glad to see you, sir—I'm very glad to see you."

If you had heard the tone of mingled good-will, veneration, and condolence in which this greeting was uttered, even without seeing the face that completely harmonised with it, you would have no difficulty in inferring the ground-notes of Mr. Jerome's character. To a fine ear, that tone said as plainly as possible—"Whatever recommends itself to me, Thomas Jerome, as piety and goodness, shall have my love and honour."

Mr. Tryan, who was a new-comer in town, had not hitherto been to the White House, but meeting Mr. Jerome in the street, had at once accepted his cordial invitation to tea. He appeared warm and fatigued, and after shaking hands with Mrs. Jerome, threw himself into a chair and looked out on the pretty garden with an air of relief, until

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

the preparations for tea were crowned by the simultaneous appearance of Lizzie and the crumpet. It is a pretty surprise, when one visits an elderly couple, to see a little figure enter in a white frock with a blonde head as smooth as satin, round blue eyes, and a cheek like an apple-blossom. A toddling little girl is a centre of common feeling which makes the most dissimilar people understand each other; and Mr. Tryan looked at Lizzie with that quiet pleasure which is always genuine.

"Here we are, here we are!" said the proud grandpa. "You didn't think we'd got such a little gell as this, did you, Mr. Tryan? Why, it seems but th' other day since her mother was just such another. This is our little Lizzie, this is. Come an' shake hands wi' Mr. Tryan, Lizzie; come."

Lizzie advanced without hesitation, and put out one hand, while she fingered her coral necklace with the other, and looked up into Mr. Tryan's face with a reconnoitering gaze. He stroked the satin head, and said in his gentlest voice, "How do you do, Lizzie? Will you give me a kiss?" She put up her little bud of a mouth, and then retreated a little and, glancing down at her frock, said:

"Dit id my noo fock. I put id on 'tod you wad toming. Tally taid you wouldn't 'ook at it."

"Hush, hush, Lizzie! Little gells must be seen and not heard," said Mrs. Jerome; while grandpapa, winking significantly, and looking radiant with delight at Lizzie's extraordinary promise of cleverness, set her up on her high cane-chair by the side of grandma, who lost no time in shielding the beauties of the new frock with a napkin. Then she entered with great animation into a grave discussion of church matters with Mr. Tryan and her husband.

Tea being over, Mr. Tryan proposed a walk in the gar-

LITTLE LIZZIE

den. Little Lizzie's appeal, "Me go, gandpa!" could not be rejected; so she was duly bonneted and pinafored, and then they turned out into the evening sunshine. As they walked and talked and examined the pretty pasture where the large, spotted, short-horned cow quietly chewed the cud as she lay and looked sleepily at her admirers, Mr. Jerome said:

"I've a good bit more land besides this, worth your while to look at; but mayhap it's further nor you'd like to walk now. Bless you! I've welly an acre of potato ground yonders; I've a good big family to supply, you know." (Here Mr. Jerome winked and smiled significantly.) "And that puts i' mind, Mr. Tryan, o' summat I wanted to say to you. Clergymen like you, I know, see a deal more poverty than other folks, and if you'll make use o' my purse any time, or let me know where I can be of any help, I'll take it very kind on you."

"Thank you, Mr. Jerome, I will do so, I promise you," said Mr. Tryan gratefully. He was beginning to appreciate to a slight extent the measure of this simple man's goodness.

Dear Mr. Jerome! Deep was the fountain of pity in the good old man's heart. He often ate his dinner stintingly, oppressed by the thought that there were men, women, and children with no dinner to sit down to, and would relieve his mind by going out in the afternoon to look for some need that he could supply; some honest struggle in which he could lend a helping hand. That any living being should want, was his chief sorrow; that any rational being should waste, was the next. Sally, indeed, having been scolded by master for a too lavish use of sticks in lighting the kitchen fire, and various instances of recklessness with regard to candle-ends, considered him "as mean as enythink," but he had as kindly a warmth as the morning sunlight, and, like

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

the sunlight, his goodness shone on all that came in his way, from the saucy rosy-cheeked lad whom he delighted to make happy with a Christmas box, to the pallid sufferers up dim entries, languishing under the tardy death of want and misery.

It was very pleasant to Mr. Tryan to listen to the simple chat of the old man, to walk in the shade of the incomparable orchard, to drink in the sweet evening breath of the garden, and, indeed, he was not the only one to whom this was both relaxation and rest. There was nothing that neighbours and friends liked better than to take an early tea at the White House; and of all the pretty pictures which you may see in a lifetime, you will never see a prettier one than the kind-faced, white-haired old man, telling fragments of his simple experience to a friend as he walked, with shoulders slightly bent, among the moss-roses and apple trees, little Lizzie, with her nankin bonnet hanging down her back, toddling beside him. Let us leave the dear old man there among his favourite surroundings, with the pretty child who was at once his most precious treasure and the brightest spot in his declining years.

JACOB COHEN



JACOB COHEN AND MORDECAI.

JACOB COHEN

DANIEL DERONDA, the adopted son of Sir Hugo Mallinger, was rambling through those parts of London which are most inhabited by common Jews; his object was a most important one—that of finding a man by the name of Ezra Cohen, and his reason for the search was as important as the object of it.

Some months before this date, Deronda, rowing idly up the Thames, discovered upon its right bank a young girl, hardly more than eighteen, of slim figure, with a most delicate little face, her dark curls pushed behind her ears under a large black hat, a long woolen cloak over her shoulders. Deronda had been singing as he rowed, but when he saw the young girl, whose eyes were fixed on the river with a look of statue-like despair, he not only ceased singing, but felt an outleap of interest and compassion toward her, sure that she needed help. When he approached her he found his supposition was correct. She was discouraged, helpless, and alone in the world, and Deronda carried her away with him to the home of his college chum, Hans Meyrick, where he knew she would be tenderly cared for by that kindly family, who became immediately interested in her sweet personality. That she was a Jewess, by name Mirah Cohen, took nothing from their interest, and Deronda finding that she had an elder brother, Ezra, from whom she had been long separated, but who she believed to be still in London,

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

took upon himself to find him for her. For this reason we find him haunting the Jewish quarters of the city, and gazing anxiously at the name over every small shop window.

Presently his attention was caught by some fine old clasps in chased silver, displayed in a shop window. He saw that the shop was a kind of pawn-broker's, also that a placard in one corner announced—"Watches and jewelry exchanged and repaired," and over the shop window he saw the name "Ezra Cohen."

There might be a hundred Ezra Cohens lettered above shop windows, but Deronda had not seen them. He went home deep in debate as to whether the shopkeeper might not be Mirah's brother, who was grown up while she was still a little child. He intended to return to the pawnshop at once, but was hindered for several days, and when he returned to the neighbourhood he first paused for a moment before the window of a second-hand bookshop in which he saw a volume which he wished to purchase.

Entering, he confronted a figure that was somewhat startling in its unusualness—a frail-looking man in threadbare clothing, whose age was difficult to guess—who, from his face and features, might have been a prophet of the Exile or some New Hebrew poet of the mediæval time. The features were clear-cut and not large, the brow not high, but broad, and fully defined by the crisp black hair. It might never have been a particularly handsome face, but it must always have been forcible; and to Deronda's mind it brought so strange a blending of the unwonted with the common that there was a perceptible interval of mutual observation before he asked the price of the book he wished to buy.

"You are a man of learning—you are interested in Jewish history?" asked the bookseller.

JACOB COHEN

"I am certainly interested in Jewish history," said Deronda.

Immediately the strange Jew rose from his sitting posture, and Deronda felt a thin hand pressing his arm tightly, while a hoarse excited voice said in a loud whisper:

"You are perhaps of our race?"

Deronda coloured deeply, and answered "No." At once the eagerness of the face collapsed into uninterested melancholy as the stranger said, with distant civility,

"I believe Mr. Ram, for whom I'm keeping the shop while he is gone to dinner, will be satisfied with half-a-crown, sir."

The effect of this change on Deronda was oddly embarrassing and humiliating, as if some high dignitary had dismissed him. There was nothing further to be said, however, so he paid his half-crown and carried off his book with a mere "Good morning," and presently entered the neighbouring shop with *Ezra Cohen* over its door, and was confronted by Ezra Cohen himself, whose flourishing face glistening on the way to fatness was hanging over the counter in negotiation with a customer. Seeing Deronda enter, he called out, "Mother! mother!" and then with a familiar nod and smile said, "Coming, sir—coming directly."

Deronda, with some anxiety in his expression, saw a vigorous, elderly Jewess approach to serve him, and he sincerely hoped she was not Mirah's mother; in fact, it seemed impossible that she might have had a lovely daughter whose type of feature and expression was like Mirah's.

Meanwhile, two new customers entered, and the repeated call, "Addy!" brought from the back of the shop a group that Deronda turned frankly to stare at, feeling sure that the stare would be held complimentary. The group consisted of a black-eyed young woman, who carried a black-

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

eyed little one, its head already well-covered with black curls, and deposited it on the counter; also a robust boy of six and a younger girl, both with black eyes and black-ringed hair. The young woman answering to "Addy"—a sort of paroquet in a bright blue dress, with coral necklace and earrings, her hair set up in a huge bush—looked as complacently lively and unrefined as her husband; and by certain differences from the mother, deepened in Deronda the unwelcome impression that the latter was not so utterly common a Jewess as to exclude her being the mother of Mirah. While that thought was glancing through his mind, the boy had run forward into the shop with an energetic stamp, and setting himself about four feet from Deronda, with his hands in the pockets of his miniature knicker-bockers, looked at him with a precocious air of survey. Perhaps it was chiefly with a diplomatic design to linger and ingratiate himself that Deronda patted the boy's head, saying:

"What is your name, sirrah?"

"Jacob Alexander Cohen," said the small man, with much ease and distinctness.

"You are not named after your father, then?"

"No; after my grandfather. He sells knives and razors and scissors—my grandfather does," said Jacob, wishing to impress the stranger with that high connection. "He gave me this knife."

Here a pocket-knife was drawn forth, and the small fingers, both naturally and artificially dark, opened two blades and a corkscrew with much quickness.

"Is not that a dangerous plaything?" said Deronda, turning to the grandmother.

"He'll never hurt himself, bless you!" said she, contemplating her grandson with placid rapture.

JACOB COHEN

"Have you got a knife?" said Jacob, coming closer. His small voice was hoarse in its glibness, as if it belonged to an aged commercial soul, fatigued with bargaining through many generations.

"Yes. Do you want to see it?" said Deronda, taking a small penknife from his waistcoat-pocket.

Jacob seized it immediately and retreated a little, holding the two knives in his palms and bending over them in meditative comparison. By this time the other clients were gone, and the whole family had gathered to the spot, centring their attention on the marvellous Jacob; the father, mother, and grandmother behind the counter, with baby held staggering thereon, and the little girl in front leaning at her brother's elbow to assist him in looking at the knives.

"Mine's the best," said Jacob, at last, returning Deronda's knife, as if he had been entertaining the idea of exchange, and had rejected it.

Father and mother laughed aloud with delight. "You won't find Jacob choosing the worst," said Mr. Cohen, winking with much confidence in the customer's admiration. Deronda, looking at the grandmother, who had only an inward silent laugh, said:

"Are these the only grandchildren you have?"

"All. This is my only son," she answered, in a communicative tone, Deronda's glance and manner as usual conveying the impression of sympathetic interest—which on this occasion answered his purpose well. Then, to stimulate conversation still further, he continued:

"A loan of fifty pounds at once would be a help to me. I have a fine diamond ring to offer as security—I will come again this evening and bring it with me, if that suits your convenience."

Cohen assented to this proposition, but here the marvel-

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

lous Jacob showed that he had been listening with much comprehension, by saying, " You are coming again? Have you got any more knives at home?"

" I think I have one," said Deronda, smiling down at him.

" Has it two blades and a hook—and a white handle like that? " said Jacob, pointing to the waistcoat-pocket.

" I dare say it has."

" Do you like a corkscrew? " said Jacob, exhibiting that article in his own knife again, and looking up with serious inquiry.

" Yes," said Deronda, experimentally.

" Bring your knife, then, and we'll shwop," said Jacob, returning the knife to his pocket, and stamping about with the sense that he had concluded a good transaction.

The grandmother and the whole family watched Deronda radiantly when he caressingly lifted the little girl, to whom he had not hitherto given attention, and seating her on the counter, asked for her name also. She looked at him in silence, and put her fingers to her gold earrings, which he did not seem to have noticed.

" Adelaide Rebekah is her name," said her mother proudly. " Speak to the gentleman, lovey."

" Shlav'm Shabbes fyock on," said Adelaide Rebekah.

" Her Sabbath frock, she means," said the father, in explanation.

" She'll have her Sabbath frock on this evening."

" And will you let me see you in it, Adelaide? " said Deronda, with that gentle intonation which came very easily to him.

" Say yes, lovey—yes, if you please, sir," said her mother, enchanted with this handsome young gentleman, who appreciated remarkable children.

JACOB COHEN

"And will you give me a kiss this evening?" said Deronda, with a hand on each of her little brown shoulders.

Adelaide Rebekah immediately put up her lips to pay the kiss in advance; whereupon her father, rising into still more glowing satisfaction with the general meritoriousness of his circumstances, and with the stranger who was an admiring witness, said cordially:

"You see, there's somebody will be disappointed if you don't come this evening, sir. You won't mind sitting down in our family place and waiting a bit for me, if I'm not in when you come, sir? I'll stretch a point to accommodate a gent of your sort. Bring the diamond, and I'll see what I can do for you."

Deronda thus left the most favourable impression behind him, as a preparation for more easy intercourse. But for his own part his spirits were heavy. If these were really Mirah's relatives, he could not imagine that even her fervid filial piety could give the reunion with them any sweetness beyond the fulfilment of a painful duty. He took refuge in disbelief. To find an Ezra Cohen when the name was running in your head was no more extraordinary than to find a Josiah Smith under like circumstances, he argued with himself as he left the little shop.

When he again arrived there at five o'clock, the shop was closed and the door was opened for him by the Christian servant. When she showed him into the room behind the shop he was surprised at the prettiness of the scene. The house was old, and rather extensive at the back: probably the large room he now entered was gloomy by daylight, but now it was agreeably lit by a fine old brass lamp with seven oil-lights hanging above the snow-white cloth spread on the central table. The ceiling and walls were smoky, and all the surroundings were dark enough to throw into

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

relief the human figures, which had a Venetian glow of colouring. The grandmother was arrayed in yellowish brown with a large gold chain in lieu of the necklace, and by this light her yellow face, with its darkly-marked eyebrows and framing *rouleau* of grey hair, looked as handsome as was necessary for picturesque effect. Young Mrs. Cohen was clad in red and black, with a string of large artificial pearls wound round and round her neck; the baby lay asleep in the cradle under a scarlet counterpane; Adelaide Rebekah was in braided amber; and Jacob Alexander was in black velveteen with scarlet stockings. As the four pairs of black eyes all glistened a welcome at Deronda, he was almost ashamed of the supercilious dislike these happy-looking creatures had raised in him by daylight. Nothing could be more cordial than the greeting he received, and both mother and grandmother seemed to gather more dignity from being seen on the private hearth, showing hospitality. He looked round with some wonder at the old furniture: the oaken bureau and high side table must surely be mere matters of chance and economy, and not due to the family taste. A large dish of blue-and-yellow ware was set up on the side table, and flanking it were two old silver vessels; in front of them a large volume in darkened vellum with a deep-ribbed back. In the corner at the farther end was an open door into an inner room, where there was also a light.

Deronda took in these details while he met Jacob's pressing solicitude about the knife. He had taken the pains to buy one with the requisites of a hook and white handle, and produced it on demand, saying:

"Is that the sort of thing you want, Jacob?"

It was subjected to a severe scrutiny, the hook and blades were opened, and the article of barter with the corkscrew was drawn for comparison.

JACOB COHEN

"Why do you like a hook better than a corkscrew?" said Deronda.

"'Caush I can get hold of things with a hook. A corkscrew won't go into anything but corks. But it's better for you, you can draw corks."

"You agree to change, then?" said Deronda, observing that the grandmother was listening with delight.

"What else have you got in your pockets?" said Jacob, with deliberate seriousness.

"Hush, hush, Jacob, love," said the grandmother. And Deronda, mindful of discipline, answered:

"I think I must not tell you that. Our business was with the knives."

Jacob looked up into his face scanningly for a moment or two, and apparently arriving at his conclusions, said gravely:

"I'll shwop," handing the corkscrew knife to Deronda, who pocketed it with corresponding gravity.

Immediately the small son of Shem ran off into the next room, whence his voice was heard in rapid chat; and then ran back again—when, seeing his father enter, he seized a little velveteen hat which lay on a chair and put it on to approach him. Cohen kept on his own hat, and took no notice of the visitor, but stood still while the two children went up to him and clasped his knees: then he laid his hands on each in turn and uttered his Hebrew benediction; whereupon the wife, who had lately taken baby from the cradle, brought it up to her husband, and held it under his outstretched hands, to be blessed in its sleep. For the moment Deronda thought that this pawnbroker, proud of his vocation, was not utterly prosaic.

"That is the ring I spoke of," said Deronda, taking it from his finger. "I believe it cost a hundred pounds. It

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

will be a sufficient pledge to you for fifty, I think. I shall probably redeem it in a month or so."

Cohen took the ring, examined and returned it, saying with indifference, "Good, good. We'll talk of it after our meal. Perhaps you'll join us, if you've no objection. Me and my wife 'll feel honoured, and so will mother; won't you, mother?"

The invitation was doubly echoed, and Deronda gladly accepted it. All now turned and stood round the table. No dish was at present seen except one covered with a napkin; and Mrs. Cohen had placed a china bowl near her husband that he might wash his hands in it. But after putting on his hat again, he paused, and called in a loud voice, "Mordecai!"

Can this be part of the religious ceremony? thought Deronda, not knowing what might be expected of the ancient hero. But he heard a "Yes" from the next room, which made him look toward the open door; and there, to his astonishment, he saw the figure of the frail-looking Jew whom he had that morning met with in the bookshop. Their eyes met, and Mordecai looked as much surprised as Deronda—neither in his surprise, however, making any sign of recognition.

Cohen now washed his hands, pronouncing Hebrew words the while; afterwards he took off the napkin covering the dish and disclosed the two long flat loaves besprinkled with seed—the memorial of the manna that fed the wandering forefathers—and breaking off small pieces gave one to each of the family, including Adelaide Rebekah, who stood on the chair with her whole length exhibited in her amber-coloured garment, her little Jewish nose lengthened by compression of the lip in the effort to make a suitable appearance. Cohen then began another Hebrew

JACOB COHEN

blessing, in which Jacob put on his hat to join with close imitation. After that, the heads were uncovered, all seated themselves, and the meal went on without any peculiarity that interested Deronda. He was not very conscious of what dishes he ate from, being preoccupied with a desire to turn the conversation in a way that would enable him to ask some leading question; and also with thinking of Mordecai, between whom and himself there was an exchange of fascinated, half-furtive glances. It was noticeable that the thin tails of the fried fish were given to Mordecai; and in general the sort of share assigned to a poor relation.

Mr. Cohen kept up the conversation with much liveliness, introducing as subjects always in taste (the Jew was proud of his loyalty) the Queen and the royal family, the Emperor and Empress of the French—into which both grandmother and wife entered with zest.

“Our baby is named Eugenie Esther,” said young Mrs. Cohen vivaciously.

“It’s wonderful how the Emperor’s like a cousin of mine in the face,” said the grandmother; “it struck me like lightning when I caught sight of him. I couldn’t have thought it.”

“Mother and me went to see the Emperor and Empress at the Crystal Palace,” said Mr. Cohen. “I had a fine piece of work to take care of mother; she might have been squeezed flat—though she was pretty near as lusty then as she is now. I said, if I had a hundred mothers, I’d never take one of ‘em to the Crystal Palace again; and you may think a man can’t afford it when he’s got but one mother—not if he’d ever so big an insurance on her.” He stroked his mother’s shoulder affectionately, and chuckled a little at his own humour.

“Your mother has been a widow a long while, perhaps,”

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

said Deronda, seizing his opportunity. "That has made your care for her the more needful."

"Ay, ay, it's a good many years since I had to manage for her and myself," said Cohen quickly. "I went early to it. It's that makes you a sharp knife."

"What does—what makes a sharp knife, father?" said Jacob, his cheek very much swollen with sweet-cake.

The father winked at his guest and said, "Having your nose put on the grindstone."

Jacob slipped from his chair with the piece of sweet-cake in his hand, and going close up to Mordecai, who had been totally silent hitherto, said, "What does that mean—putting my nose to the grindstone?"

"It means that you are to bear being hurt without making a noise," said Mordecai, turning his eyes benignantly on the small face close to his. Jacob put the corner of the cake into Mordecai's mouth as an invitation to bite, saying meanwhile, "I sha'n't, though!" and keeping his eyes on the cake to observe how much of it went in this act of generosity. Mordecai took a bite and smiled, evidently meaning to please the lad, and the little incident made them both look more lovable. Deronda, however, felt with some vexation that he had discovered little by his question, and turned to Mordecai, whose personality interested him greatly. Their conversation was interrupted by Mr. Cohen, who was now ready to give his valuation of Deronda's ring. Forty pounds was the sum agreed upon for the loan, after which Deronda said, "Very well; I shall redeem it in a month or so."

"Good. I'll make you out the ticket by-and-by," answered Cohen indifferently. Then he held up his finger as a sign that conversation must be deferred. He, Mordecai, and Jacob put on their hats, and Cohen opened a thanksgiving, which was carried on by responses, till Mordecai

JACOB COHEN

delivered himself alone at some length, in a solemn chanting tone, with his chin slightly uplifted and his thin hands clasped before him. No sooner had he finished his devotional strain than, rising with a slight bend of his head to the stranger, he walked back into his room and shut the door behind him.

"That seems to be rather a remarkable man," said Deronda, turning to Cohen. "Does he belong to your family?"

"No, no," said Cohen. "Charity! charity! He worked for me, and when he got weaker and weaker I took him in. He is an incumbrance; but he brings a blessing down, and he teaches the boy. Besides, he does the repairing at the watches and jewelry."

Deronda was amused at this mixture of kindness and calculation, but spoke no further on the subject of Mordecai, and having settled the business which was the pretext of his visit, took his leave, with no more decided result than the advance of forty pounds and the pawn-ticket in his pocket, to make a reason for returning when he came up to town after Christmas. He was resolved that he would then endeavour to gain a little more insight into the character and history of Mordecai; from whom he might also gather something decisive about the Cohens.

During the months before Deronda's return to the shop, Mordecai was occupied in his customary way. It was now two years since he had taken up his abode under Ezra Cohen's roof, during which time little Jacob had advanced into knickerbockers, and into that quickness of apprehension which has been already made manifest in relation to hardware and exchange. He had also advanced in attachment to Mordecai, whose habitual tenderness easily turned into

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

the teacher's fatherhood. The boy moved him with that idealising affection which merges the qualities of the individual child in the glory of childhood and the possibilities of a long future. And this feeling had drawn him on to a sort of outpouring in the ear of the boy which might have seemed wild enough to any man of business who overheard it. But none overheard when Jacob went up to Mordecai's room, and, after a brief lesson in English reading or in enumeration, was induced to remain standing at his teacher's knees, or chose to jump astride them, often to the patient fatigue of the wasted limbs. The inducement was perhaps the mending of a toy, or some little mechanical device in which Mordecai's well-practised finger-tips had an exceptional skill; and with the boy thus tethered, he would begin to repeat a Hebrew poem of his own, telling Jacob to say the words after him.

"The boy will get them engraved within him," thought Mordecai; "it is a way of printing."

None readier than Jacob at this fascinating game of imitating unintelligible words; and if no opposing diversion occurred, he would sometimes carry on his share in it as long as the teacher's breath would last out. For Mordecai threw into each repetition the fervour befitting a sacred occasion. In such instances, Jacob would show no other distraction than reaching out and surveying the contents of his pockets; or drawing down the skin of his cheeks to make his eyes look awful, and rolling his head to complete the effect; or alternately handling his own nose and Mordecai's. Under all this the fervid reciter would not pause, satisfied if the young organs of speech would submit themselves. But most commonly a sudden impulse sent Jacob leaping away into some antic or active amusement, when, instead of following the recitation, he would return

JACOB COHEN

upon the foregoing words most ready to his tongue and mouth, or gabble, with a see-saw suited to the action of his limbs, a verse on which Mordecai had spent some of his too scanty heart's blood. Yet he waited with such patience as a prophet needs, and began his strange printing again undiscouraged on the morrow, saying inwardly:

“ My words may rule him some day. Their meaning may flash out on him.”

Meanwhile Jacob's sense of power was increased and his time enlivened by a store of magical articulation with which he made the baby crow, or drove the large cat into a dark corner, or promised himself to frighten any incidental Christian of his own years. One week he had unfortunately seen a street mountebank, and this carried off his muscular imitativeness in sad divergence from New Hebrew poetry. Mordecai had arrived at a fresh passage in his poem; for as soon as Jacob had got well used to one portion, he was led on to another, and a fresh combination of sounds generally answered better in keeping him fast for a few minutes. Mordecai's voice had more than its usual excitement while he intoned Hebrew verses with absorbing enthusiasm. In his absorption he was unconscious that Jacob had ceased to follow him, and had started away from his knees; but pausing, he saw that the lad had thrown himself on his hands with his feet in the air, mountebank fashion, and was picking up with his lips a bright farthing which was a favourite among his pocket treasures.

“ Child, child! a curse is on your generation!” Mordecai exclaimed with a strange cry; then leaned forward, grasping the little shoulders, and spoke again in a quick hoarse whisper which shook Jacob's little frame with awe and made him feel that the house was tumbling in, and they were not going to have dinner any more. But when the mysterious

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

and terrible speech had ended, and the pinch was relaxed, the shock resolved itself into tears, and Jacob lifted up his small countenance and wept aloud. This sign of childish grief at once recalled Mordecai to his usual gentle self, and with a maternal action he drew the curly head toward him and pressed it against his breast. On this, Jacob, feeling the danger well-nigh over, howled at ease, beginning to imitate his own performance and improve upon it. Indeed, the next day he undertook to terrify Adelaide Rebekah in like manner, and succeeded very well.

Glistening was the gladness in the faces of the Cohens when Deronda reappeared among them. Cohen himself took occasion to intimate that although the diamond ring, let alone a little longer, would have bred more money, he did not mind that—not a sixpence—when compared with the pleasure of the women and children in seeing a young gentleman whose first visit had been so agreeable that they had “done nothing but talk of it ever since.” Young Mrs. Cohen was very sorry that baby was asleep, and then very glad that Adelaide was not yet gone to bed, entreating Deronda not to stay in the shop, but to go forthwith into the parlour to see “mother and the children.” He willingly accepted the invitation, having provided himself with portable presents; a set of paper figures for Adelaide, and an ivory cup and ball for Jacob.

The grandmother had a pack of cards before her and was making “plates” with the children. A plate had just been thrown down and kept itself whole.

“Stop!” said Jacob, running up to Deronda as he entered. “Don’t tread on my plate. Stop and see me throw it up again.”

Deronda complied, exchanging a smile of understanding with the grandmother, and the plate bore several tossings

JACOB COHEN

before it came to pieces; then the visitor was allowed to come forward and seat himself, and inquire if Mordecai was in —feeling it necessary to disclose the fact that he had had some intercourse with Mordecai lately at Ram's bookshop, and that he had promised to go out with him that night.

Jacob, who had been listening inconveniently near to Deronda's elbow, said with obliging familiarity, "I'll call Mordecai for you, if you like."

"No, Jacob," said his mother; "open the door for the gentleman, and let him go in himself. Hush! Don't make a noise."

Skilful Jacob seemed to enter into the play, and turned the handle of the door as noiselessly as possible, while Deronda went behind him and stood on the threshold. Later, when he and Mordecai came out together, ready to go to a meeting of "The Philosophers' Club," Jacob seized Mordecai by the arm, and said, "See my cup and ball!" and Mordecai smiled and said, "Fine, fine!"

"Shall you come again?" asked Jacob, advancing to Deronda. "See, I can catch the ball; I bet I can catch it without stopping, if you come again."

"He has clever hands," said Deronda, looking at the grandmother. "Which side of the family does he get them from?"

But the grandmother only nodded toward her son, who said promptly, "My side." Here Cohen winked at Jacob's back, saying, "There's nothing some old gentlemen won't do, if you set 'em to it," and Jacob began to stamp about, singing, "Old gentlemen, old gentlemen," in chiming cadence.

That evening, after the club meeting was over, Mordecai and Deronda had a long, intimate, and serious personal

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

conversation, during which, unknown to Mordecai, Deronda made a great discovery. Mordecai's real name was Ezra Mordecai Cohen, although he was no relation of the Cohens with whom he lived, and he was no other than Mirah's long-lost brother. This Deronda learned from a chance disclosure of Mordecai's, and he did not at once reveal the startling, and to him, joyful, news to Mordecai, fearing that the excitement might be too much for his high-strung nature to bear at the end of the evening, but simply parted with him at the Cohens' door with a silent pressure of the hand.

As soon, however, as necessary arrangements had been made, Deronda lost no time in returning to the little shop, after having prepared Mordecai for his visit by a letter in which he asked for a conversation with him on a matter of grave importance.

He was received at the shop with the usual friendliness, and when he said, "I suppose Mordecai is at home," Jacob, who had profited by family remarks about the intimacy between Mordecai and Deronda, went up to his knee and said, "What do you want to talk to Mordecai about?"

"Something that is very interesting to him," said Deronda, pinching the lad's ear, "but that you can't understand."

"Can you say this?" said Jacob, immediately giving forth a string of his rote-learned Hebrew verses with a wonderful mixture of the throaty and the nasal, and nodding his small head at his hearer.

"No, really," said Deronda, keeping grave; "I can't say anything like it."

"I thought not," said Jacob, performing a dance of triumph with his small scarlet legs, while he took various objects out of the deep pockets of his knickerbockers and re-

JACOB COHEN

turned them thither, as a slight hint of his resources; after which, running to the door of the workroom, he opened it wide and said, "Mordecai, here's the young swell——"

He was called back with hushes by mother and grandmother, and Deronda, entering and closing the door behind him, found Mordecai ready to greet him, with an air of solemn expectation in his face, such as would have seemed perfectly natural if his letter had declared that some revelation was to be made about the lost sister. After an hour of solemn conversation, during which the great disclosure was made, and Deronda had communicated the fact that he had prepared a home for Mordecai to take his sister to, Mordecai said in a melancholy tone, "But I shall grieve to part from these parents and the little ones. You must tell them, for my heart would fail me."

"I felt that you would want me to tell them. Shall we go at once?" said Deronda.

"Yes; let us not defer it," said Mordecai, rising with the air of a man who has to perform a painful duty.

When they entered the parlour he said to the alert Jacob, "Ask your father to come, and tell Sarah to mind the shop. My friend has something to say," he continued, turning to the elder Mrs. Cohen. Then Cohen entered and rubbed his hands, saying with loud satisfaction, "Well, sir! I'm glad you're doing us the honour to join our family party again. We are pretty comfortable."

He looked round with shiny gladness. And when all were seated round the hearth, the scene was worth peeping in upon; on one side baby under her scarlet quilt in the corner being rocked by the young mother, and Adelaide Rebekah seated on the grandmother's knee; on the other, Jacob between his father's legs; while the two markedly different figures of Deronda and Mordecai were in the middle

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

—Mordecai a little backward in the shade, anxious to conceal his agitated susceptibility to what was going on round him. The chief light came from the fire, which brought out the rich colour on the depth of shadow, and seemed to turn into speech the dark gems of eyes that looked at each other kindly.

“I have just been telling Mordecai of an event that makes a great change in his life,” Deronda began; “but I hope you will agree with me that it is a joyful one. Since he thinks of you as his best friends, he wishes me to tell you for him at once. A very precious relation wishes to be reunited to him—a very good and lovely young sister who will care for his comfort in every way and with talents which will secure her a maintenance. A home is already provided for Mordecai.”

There was a silence for some moments before the grandmother said in a wailing tone:

“Well, well! and so you’re going away from us, Mordecai.”

“And where there’s no children as there is here,” said the mother, catching the wail.

“No Jacob, and no Adelaide, and no Eugenie!” wailed the grandmother again.

“Ay, ay, Jacob’s learning ’ill all wear out of him. He must go to school. It’ll be hard times for Jacob,” said Cohen, in a tone of decision.

In the wide-open ears of Jacob his father’s words sounded like a doom, giving an awful finish to the dirge-like effect of the whole announcement. His face had been gathering a wondering incredulous sorrow at the notion of Mordecai’s going away; he was unable to imagine the change as anything lasting; but at the mention of “hard times for Jacob,” there was no further suspense of feeling, and he broke forth

JACOB COHEN

in loud lamentation. Adelaide Rebekah always cried when her brother cried, and now began to howl with astonishing suddenness, whereupon baby, awaking, contributed angry screams, and required to be taken out of the cradle. A great deal of hushing was necessary, and Mordecai, feeling the cries pierce him, put out his arms to Jacob, who in the midst of his tears and sobs was turning his head right and left for general observation. His father, who had been saying, "Never mind, old man; you shall go to the riders," now released him, and he went to Mordecai, who clasped him, and laid his cheek on the little black head without speaking. But Cohen, sensible that the master of the family must make some apology for all this weakness, and that the occasion called for a speech, addressed Deronda with some elevation of pitch, squaring his elbows and resting a hand on each knee:

"It's not as we're the people to grudge anybody's good luck, sir, or the portion of their cup being made fuller, as I may say. And though, as I may say, you're taking some of our good works from us, which is a property bearing interest, I'm not saying but that we can afford that—though my mother and my wife have the good-will to wish and do for Mordecai to the last. And as to the extra outlay in schooling, I'm neither poor nor greedy. But the truth of it is, the women and children are fond of Mordecai. You may partly see how it is, sir, by your own sense. So you must excuse present company, sir, for not being glad all at once. And as for this young lady—for by what you say 'Young lady' is the proper term—we shall all be glad for Mordecai's sake by and by, when we cast up our accounts and see where we are."

Before Deronda could answer this speech, Mordecai exclaimed:

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

“Friends, friends! for food and raiment and shelter I would not have sought better than you have given me. You have sweetened the morsel with love; and what I thought of as a joy that would be left to me even in the last months of my waning strength was to go on teaching the lad. For no light matter would I have turned away from your kindness to take another’s. But it has been taught us that ‘*the reward of one duty is the power to fulfil another*’—so said Ben Azzi. You have made your duty to one of the poor among your brethren a joy to you and me; and your reward shall be that you will not rest without the joy of like deeds in the time to come. And may not Jacob come and visit me?”

Mordecai had turned with this question to Deronda, who said:

“Surely that can be managed. It is no further than Brompton.”

Jacob, who had been gradually calmed by the need to hear what was going forward, began now to see some daylight on the future, the word “visit” having the lively charm of cakes and general relaxation at his grandfather’s, the dealer in knives.

He danced away from Mordecai, and took up a station of survey in the middle of the hearth with his hands in his knickerbockers, making a brilliant dash of colour in the room with his little scarlet legs and his dark flashing eyes.

There is no doubt about it, such as Jacob are born under the lucky star which gives them the ability to handle affairs of personal importance with great success, and as we see him there on the hearth in his favourite position, watching Mordecai and Deronda depart, we can easily foresee that whenever he wishes he will be a visitor in the new home provided for Mordecai and Mirah, and that he will have

JACOB COHEN

the wish often. In fact we have proof of it in a letter received by Deronda from his friend Hans Meyrick, many weeks later when Deronda was in Italy. Hans Meyrick said:

"I'm not convinced that my society makes amends to Mordecai for your absence, but another substitute occasionally comes in the form of Jacob Cohen. It is worth while to catch our Prophet's expression when he has that remarkable type of young Israel on his knee, and pours forth some Semitic inspiration with a sublime look of melancholy patience and devoutness. Sometimes it occurs to Jacob that Hebrew will be more edifying to him if he stops his ears with his palms, and imitates the venerable sounds as heard through that muffling medium. When Mordecai gently draws down the little fists and holds them fast, Jacob's features all take on an extraordinary activity, very much as if he were walking through a menagerie and trying to imitate every animal in turn, succeeding best with the owl and the peccary. But I dare say you have seen something of this. He treats me as a second-hand Christian commodity, likely to come down in price; remarking on my disadvantages with a frankness which seems to imply some thoughts of future purchase. It is pretty, though, to see the change in him if Mirah happens to come in. He turns child suddenly,—and, with Mirah, reminds me of the dogs that have been brought up by women, and remain manageable by them only. Still, the dog is fond of Mordecai, too, and brings sugar-plums to share with him, filling his own mouth to rather an embarrassing extent, and watching how Mordecai deals with a smaller supply. Judging from this modern Jacob at the age of six, my astonishment is that his race has not bought us all up long ago, and pocketed our

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

feeble generations in the form of stock and script, as so much slave property."

So wrote Hans Meyrick concerning Jacob Alexander Cohen, and it is with a feeling of perfect safety in regard to his prosperity in life that we leave him standing before the fire in the Cohen parlour with wide-spread legs, and hands in his knickerbocker pockets, sure that whether he may be standing there or otherwhere he will be master of the situation.

TINA—THE LITTLE BLACK-EYED MONKEY



TINA SARTI AND HER FATHER.

TINA—THE LITTLE BLACK-EYED MONKEY

AT Cheverel Manor, that most stately of English country homes, presided over by the blonde matron, Lady Cheverel, it was not to be wondered at that there were conjectures concerning the parentage of Caterina Sarti, "the little black-eyed monkey," as Sir Christopher called her.

How was it that this tiny dark-eyed child of the South, whose face was immediately suggestive of olive-covered hills and taper-lit shrines, came to have her home in this stately English manor house—almost as if a humming-bird were found perched on one of the elm trees in the park, by the side of her ladyship's handsomest pouter-pigeon?

Speaking good English, too, and joining in Protestant prayers—surely she must have been adopted and brought over to England at a very early age. She was.

During Sir Christopher's last visit to Italy with his lady, they resided for some time at Milan. Here Lady Cheverel engaged a singing-master, for she had then not only a fine musical taste, but a fine soprano voice. Those were days when very rich people used manuscript music, and many a man got his livelihood by copying music at so much a page. Lady Cheverel having need of this service, Maestro Albani

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

told her of a copyist whose manuscript was the neatest and most correct he knew of. Unhappily the poor man was not always in his best wits, and was sometimes slow in consequence; but it would be a work of Christian charity worthy of the beautiful Signora to employ poor Sarti.

The next morning Mrs. Sharp, Lady Cheverel's maid, entered her lady's private room, and said, "If you please, my lady, there's the frowiest, shabbiest man you ever saw, outside, and he's told Mr. Warren as the singing-master sent him to see your ladyship. But I think you'll hardly like him to come in here. Belike he's only a beggar."

"Oh, yes, show him in immediately."

Mrs. Sharp retired muttering her dissatisfaction, but presently reappeared, ushering in a small meagre man, sallow and dingy, with a restless wandering look in his dull eyes and an excessive timidity about his deep reverences. Yet through his squalor and wretchedness there were some traces discernible of comparative youth and former good looks. Lady Cheverel was essentially kind, and liked to dispense benefits like a goddess who looks down benignly on the halt, the maimed, and the blind that approach her shrine. She was smitten with compassion at the sight of poor Sarti, and spoke gently as she pointed out to him the operatic selections she wished him to copy, and he seemed to sun himself in her auburn, radiant presence, so that when he made his exit with the music books under his arm his bow, though not less reverent, was less timid.

It was long since Sarti had seen anything so bright and stately and beautiful as Lady Cheverel. For the time was far off in which he had trod the stage in satin and feathers, the first tenor of one short season. He had completely lost his voice in the following winter, and had ever since been little better than a cracked fiddle, which is good for nothing

TINA—THE LITTLE BLACK-EYED MONKEY

but firewood. For, like many Italian singers, he was too ignorant to teach, and if it had not been for his one talent of penmanship, he and his helpless young wife might have starved. Then, just after their third child was born, fever came, swept away the sickly mother and the two oldest children and attacked Sarti himself, who rose from his sick-bed with a tiny baby, scarcely four months old, on his hands. He lodged over a fruit shop kept by a stout virago, loud of tongue and irate in temper, but who had had children, and so had taken care of the tiny, yellow, black-eyed *bambinetta*, and tended Sarti himself through his sickness. Here he continued to live, earning a meagre subsistence for himself and his little one. He seemed to exist for nothing but the child; he tended it, he dandled it, he chatted to it, living with it alone in his one room above the fruit shop, only asking his landlady to take care of the little one during his short absences in fetching and carrying home work. Customers frequenting that fruit shop might often see the tiny Caterina seated on the floor with her legs in a heap of peas which it was her delight to kick about; or perhaps deposited, like a kitten, in a large basket, out of harm's way.

Sometimes, however, Sarti left his little one with another kind of protectress. He was very regular in his devotions, which he paid thrice a week in the great Cathedral, carrying Caterina with him. Here, when the high morning sun was warming the myriad glittering pinnacles without, and struggling against the massive gloom within, he might be seen making his way toward a little tinsel Madonna hanging in a retired spot near the choir. Amid all the sublimities of the mighty cathedral, poor Sarti had fixed on this Madonna as the symbol of divine mercy and protection. Here he worshipped and prayed, setting Caterina on the floor by his side; and now and then, when the cathedral lay

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

near some place where he had to call, he would leave her there in front of the tinsel Madonna, where she would sit, perfectly good, amusing herself with low crowing noises and see-sawings of her tiny body. And when Sarti came back he always found that the blessed Mother had taken good care of Caterina.

This was, briefly, the history of Sarti, who fulfilled so well the orders Lady Cheverel gave him that she sent him away again with a stock of new work. But this time, week after week passed and he neither reappeared nor sent home the music entrusted to him. Lady Cheverel was beginning to be anxious, when one day as she was equipped for driving out, the valet brought in a small piece of paper which he said had been left for her ladyship by a man who was carrying fruit. The paper contained only three tremulous lines, in Italian:

“Will the Ecceletissima, for the love of God, have pity on a dying man and come to him?”

Lady Cheverel recognised the handwriting as Sarti’s, and giving directions to her coachman, drove directly to the fruit shop and climbed the narrow dark stairs which led to Sarti’s room. Directly opposite the door lay Sarti on a bed at the foot of which was seated a tiny child; her head covered by a linen cap, her feet clothed with leather boots above which her little yellow legs showed, thin and naked. A frock made of what had once been a gay flowered silk was her only other garment. Her large, dark eyes shone from out her queer little face like two precious stones in a grotesque image carved in old ivory. She held an empty medicine bottle in her hand and was amusing herself with putting the cork in and drawing it out again to hear how it would pop.

Finding that there was nothing more to be done for poor

TINA—THE LITTLE BLACK-EYED MONKEY

Sarti, Lady Cheverel left money that the last decencies might be paid to him, and carried away Caterina. On the way back to her hotel, she turned over various projects in her mind regarding Caterina, but at last one gained the preference over all the rest. Why should they not take the child to England and bring her up there? Cheverel Manor had never been cheered by children's voices, and the old house would be the better for a little of that music. Besides, it would be a Christian work to train this little Papist into a good Protestant, and graft as much English fruit as possible on the Italian stem.

Sir Christopher listened to this plan with hearty acquiescence. He loved children, and took at once to "the little black-eyed monkey"—his name ever afterwards for Caterina. But neither he nor Lady Cheverel had any idea of adopting her as their daughter, and giving her their own rank in life. They were much too English and aristocratic to think of anything so romantic. No! the child would be brought up at Cheverel Manor as a protégée, to be ultimately useful perhaps, in sorting worsteds, keeping accounts, reading aloud and otherwise supplying the place of spectacles when her ladyship's eyes should wax dim.

So Mrs. Sharp had to procure new clothes to replace the linen cap, flowered frock and leathern boots; and now, strange to say, little Caterina first began to know conscious troubles. "Ignorance," says Ajax, "is a painless evil;" so, I should think, is dirt, considering the merry faces that go along with it. At any rate cleanliness is sometimes a painful good, as anyone can vouch who has had his face washed the wrong way by a pitiless hand with a gold ring on the third finger. This is the anguish which Caterina endured under Mrs. Sharp's new dispensation of soap and water. Happily, however, this purgatory came presently to be

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

associated in her tiny brain with pleasures as novel as they were delightful.

In three months from the time of Caterina's adoption the chimneys of Cheverel Manor were sending up unwonted smoke and the servants were awaiting in excitement the return of their master and mistress after a two years' absence. Great was the astonishment of Mrs. Bellamy, the house-keeper, when a little black-eyed child was lifted out of the carriage, and great was Mrs. Sharp's sense of superior information and experience as she detailed Caterina's history to the rest of the upper servants that evening in the house-keeper's room.

A pleasant room it was as any party need desire to muster in on a cold November evening. The fireplace alone was a picture; a wide and deep recess with a low brick altar in the middle, where great logs sent myriad sparks up the dark chimney-throat; and over the recess a large wooden entablature bore this motto, finely carved in old English letters, "Fear God and honour the King." And beyond the party who formed a half-moon with their chairs and well furnished table round this bright fireplace, what a space of light and shadow for the imagination to rove in! Stretching across the far end of the room what an oak table, high enough surely for Homer's gods, standing on four massive legs, bossed and bulging like sculptured urns! Lining the distant walls, what vast cupboards, suggestive of inexhaustible apricot jam and promiscuous butler's perquisites! A stray picture or two had found their way down there, and made agreeable patches of dark brown on the buff-coloured walls. But on this particular evening the subject of conversation was far too absorbing to make the company gathered together conscious of their surroundings, and debate between Mr. Bates, the gardener, and Mrs. Sharp, concern-

TINA—THE LITTLE BLACK-EYED MONKEY

ing the wisdom of Sir Christopher and his lady in bringing home the little foreigner, waxed high, until such time as a song sung by Mr. Bates brought the evening's amusement to a climax.

The tiny child, Caterina, soon conquered all prejudices against her foreign blood; for what prejudices will hold out against helplessness and broken prattle. She became the pet of the household, thrusting Sir Christopher's favourite bloodhound, Mrs. Bellamy's two canaries, and Mr. Bates' largest Dorking hen into a merely secondary position. Then came a cycle of experiences connected with Mrs. Sharp's nursery discipline, the grave luxury of her ladyship's sitting-room, and perhaps the dignity of a ride on Sir Christopher's knee, sometimes followed by a visit with him to the stables. There Caterina soon learned to hear without crying the baying of the chained blood-hounds, and say with ostentatious bravery, clinging to Sir Christopher's leg all the while, "Dey not hurt Tina." Then Mrs. Bellamy would perhaps be going out to gather the rose-leaves and lavender, and Tina was made proud and happy by being allowed to carry a handful in her pinafore; happier still when they were spread out to dry, so that she could sit down like a frog among them, and have them poured over her in fragrant showers. Another frequent pleasure was to take a journey with Mr. Bates through the kitchen-gardens, and the hot-houses, where the rich bunches of green and purple grapes hung from the roof, out of reach of the tiny yellow hand that could not help stretching itself out toward them, and which was sure at last to be satisfied with some delicate-flavoured fruit or sweet-scented flower. Indeed, in the long monotonous leisure of that great country house, there was always someone who had nothing better to do than to play with Tina. So the little Southern bird had its Northern nest

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

lined with tenderness and caresses and pretty things, and showed itself to be both loving and sensitive.

The only thing in which Caterina showed any precocity was a certain ingenuity in vindictiveness. When she was five years old she had revenged herself for an unpleasant prohibition by pouring the ink into Mrs. Sharp's work-basket; and once when Lady Cheverel took her doll from her because she was affectionately licking the paint off its face, the little minx straightway climbed into a chair and threw down a flower-vase that stood on a bracket. This was almost the only instance in which her anger overcame her awe of Lady Cheverel, who had the ascendency belonging to kindness that never melts into caresses, and is severely but uniformly beneficent.

By and by the happy monotony of life at Cheverel Manor was broken into. The park roads were cut up by waggons carrying loads of stone from a neighbouring quarry, the green courtyard became dusty with lime and the peaceful house rang with the sound of tools. For the next ten years Sir Christopher was occupied with such architectural changes as he was having made in the Manor House, which changed it into a splendid mansion.

While Cheverel Manor was growing from ugliness into beauty, Caterina, too, was growing from a little yellow bantling into a whiter maiden, with no positive beauty, indeed, but with a certain light, airy grace, which, with her large dark appealing eyes and a voice of low-toned tenderness, gave her a more than usual charm. Unlike the building, however, Caterina's development was the result of no systematic or careful appliances. She grew up very much like the primroses, which the gardener is not sorry to see within his enclosure, but takes no pains to cultivate. Lady Cheverel taught her to read and write and say her catechism; Mr.

TINA—THE LITTLE BLACK-EYED MONKEY

Warren, Sir Christopher's valet, being a good accountant, gave her lessons in arithmetic; and Mrs. Sharp initiated her in all the mysteries of the needle. But for a long time there was no thought of giving her any more elaborate education, and it is very likely that to her dying day Caterina thought the earth stood still, and that the sun and stars moved round it. The truth is, that with one exception, her greatest talent lay in loving. Orphan and protégée though she was, this talent of hers found plenty of exercise at Cheverel Manor, and she had more persons to be fond of than many a small lady and gentleman affluent in silver mugs and blood relations. The first place in her heart was given to Sir Christopher, and next to the Baronet came Dorcas, the merry, rosy-cheeked damsel who was Mrs. Sharp's lieutenant in the nursery, and thus played the part of the raisins in a dose of senna. It was a black day for Caterina when Dorcas married the coachman, and left Cheverel Manor. A little china box bearing the motto, "Though lost to sight, to memory dear," which Dorcas sent her as a remembrance, was among Caterina's treasures long years after.

The one other exceptional talent which Caterina possessed, as you may have guessed, was music. When the fact that she had a remarkable ear for music, and a still more remarkable voice, attracted Lady Cheverel's attention, the discovery was very welcome to both her and Sir Christopher. Much time was devoted to her education, and the rapidity of her progress surpassing all hopes, an Italian singing-master was engaged for several years to spend some months together at Cheverel Manor. This unexpected gift made a great alteration in Caterina's position. Insensibly she began to be regarded as one of the family, for Lady Cheverel loved music above all things, and the talent associated the young girl at once with the pleasures of the draw-

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

ing-room. At the same time she had the happiness of companionship with a ward of Sir Christopher's—a lad named Maynard Gilfil. He spent all of his vacations at Cheverel Manor, and found there no playfellow so much to his mind as Caterina. Maynard was an affectionate lad, who kept his fondness for white rabbits, pet squirrels, and guinea pigs perhaps a little beyond the age at which young gentlemen usually begin to look down on such pleasures. He was much given to fishing and to carpentry, and in all these pleasures it was his delight to have Caterina as his companion; so it was always a sad day for the child when Maynard went back to school. Once or twice also in Caterina's childhood there was another boy visitor at the Manor, whose name was Wybrow—a beautiful boy with brown curls and splendid clothes, on whom Caterina looked with shy admiration—and who looked on her with undisguised affection.

So, with the visits of the boys to anticipate, her daily routine of music study, and helping Lady Cheverel entertain her older guests, Caterina slowly grew from childhood into girlhood, and this child of the sunny South transplanted to the colder climate of the North, not only flourished, but constantly put out new tendrils of affection and love, which strengthened the bond between her and Lord and Lady Cheverel, who had so enriched her life.

From girlhood to young womanhood was but a step, and now we see, in place of "the little black-eyed monkey," a young lady whose small stature and slim figure rest on the tiniest of feet. Her large dark eyes in their unconscious beauty resemble the eyes of a fawn, and seem all the more striking because the dark hair is gathered away from her face, after the fashion of the times, under a little cap, set at the top of her head, with a cherry coloured bow on one side.

TINA—THE LITTLE BLACK-EYED MONKEY

One scarcely notices the absence of bloom on her young cheeks and the Southern yellowish tint of her small neck and face, rising above the little black lace kerchief which prevents the too immediate comparison of her skin with her white muslin gown.

It is the late afternoon of a bright sultry summer day, and although the sun is still an hour above the horizon, his rays, broken by the leafy fretwork of the elms that border the park, no longer prevent Caterina and Lady Cheverel from carrying out their cushions and embroidery to work on the lawn in front of Cheverel Manor. They made two bright patches on the green background of the laurels and the lawn; but the pretty picture was soon marred by the masculine addition of Sir Christopher and his young visitors—Maynard Gilfil, now the Reverend; and Anthony Wybrow, now a Captain.

Later, as the party strolled slowly through the flower-garden, Caterina tripped over to Sir Christopher with a moss-rosebud in her hand, and said coquettishly, “There, Pandroncello, there is a nice rose for your buttonhole!”

“Ah, you black-eyed monkey,” he said fondly, stroking her cheek; “come, I want you to sing to us before we sit down to picquet.” He put her little arm under his, and calling to the others, led the way towards the house, and into the great sombre, impressive library, where tea was always served, and where every evening at nine o’clock Sir Christopher and Lady Cheverel sat down to picquet until half-past ten, when prayers were read in the chapel to the assembled household.

But now it was not near nine, and Caterina must sit down to the harpsicord and sing Sir Christopher’s favourite airs in her rare contralto voice—which she did with telling effect.

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

"Excellent, Caterina," exclaimed Lady Cheverel, when there was a pause; "I never heard you sing that so well. Once more!"

The song was repeated, then, after one more and an encore, Sir Christopher said, "There's a clever black-eyed monkey! Now bring out the table for picquet."

Caterina drew out the table and placed the cards; then, with her rapid fairy suddenness of motion, and who can tell what depth of feeling, threw herself down beside Sir Christopher and clasped his knee. He bent down, stroked her cheek and smiled—and there in the tender embrace of one she loved so dearly, let us leave this "little black-eyed monkey"—child no longer, girl still in looks and ways, but young woman surely now in heart and years.

JOB TUDGE AND
HARRY TRANSOME



JOB TUDGE AND HARRY TRANSOME.

JOB TUDGE AND HARRY TRANSCOME

JOB TUDGE was a tiny, red-haired, orphaned boy, whose natural home was with his grandfather, Mr. Tudge, the stone-breaker, but whose wants were so scantily cared for by that relative that Felix Holt, finding the little fellow, took him to his own home, where he and his mother lived. This was up a back street in the village of Treby Magna, where Felix worked at repairing watches, and also gave lessons to a number of small children.

Harry Transome was the son of Harold Transome of Transome Court, an estate which lay in the village of Little Treby, and boasted a mansion built in the fashion of Queen Anne's time, with a park as fine as any to be seen in Loamshire. Little Harry was a sturdy, black-maned boy with great black eyes, and with a singular lack of affection in his nature, which lack made him delight in being with anyone whom he could rule, especially with his feeble-minded, timid, paralytic, old grandfather, to whom the despotic boy was a never-ending source of delight.

It happened that Esther Lyon, daughter of the minister of the Independent Chapel at Treby Magna, felt a great interest in the strong personality and fine character of Felix Holt, who came frequently to their little home; sometimes to discuss matters of grave importance with Mr. Lyon, and

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

sometimes to enjoy the relaxation of a talk with his gracious daughter. One morning Esther, fearing that she had offended Felix Holt during their last conversation, and wishing to apologise to him for her seeming rudeness, cast about her for an excuse which would take her to Mrs. Holt's house. To her great joy she found that her watch needed cleaning, which gave her the desired reason for the visit she wished to make.

As she knocked at the door she heard the ringing voice of Felix calling his mother to admit her, the voice surmounting various small scufflings and babbling voices within.

"I came to ask Mr. Holt if he would look at my watch for me," said Esther, entering, and blushing a general rose-colour.

"He'll do that fast enough," said Mrs. Holt, with emphasis; "that's one of the things he will do."

"Excuse my rising, Miss Lyon," said Felix; "I'm binding up Job's finger."

Job was a small fellow about five, with a germinal nose, large round blue eyes, and red hair that curled close to his head like the wool on the back of an infantine lamb. He had evidently been crying, and the corners of his mouth were still dolorous. Felix held him on his knee as he bound and tied up very cleverly a tiny forefinger. There was a table in front of Felix and against the window, covered with his watchmaking implements and some open books. Two benches stood at right angles on the sanded floor, and six or seven boys of various ages up to twelve were getting their caps and preparing to go home. They huddled themselves together and stood still when Esther entered. Felix could not look up till he had finished his surgery, but he went on speaking.

JOB TUDGE AND HARRY TRANSCOME

"This is a hero, Miss Lyon. This is Job Tudge, a bold Briton whose finger hurts him, but who doesn't mean to cry. Good morning, boys. Don't lose your time. Get out into the air."

Esther seated herself on the end of the bench near Felix, much relieved that Job was the immediate object of attention; and the other boys rushed out behind her with a brief chant of "Good morning!"

Meanwhile Esther had handed her watch to Felix, and while her eyes filled with tears, made the apology which was the real object of her visit. Suddenly little Job, looking into Esther's face, exclaimed, "Zoo soodn't kuy,"—being much impressed with the moral doctrine which had come to him after a sufficient transgression of it.

"Job is like me," said Felix, "fonder of preaching than of practise. But let us look at this watch," he went on, opening and examining it. "These little Geneva toys are cleverly constructed to go always a little wrong. But if you wind them up and set them regularly every night, you may know at least that it's not noon when the hand points there."

Felix continued to chat until Esther had recovered herself, and presently she asked in a cheerful voice: "Where does Job Tudge live?" looking at the droll little figure, set off by a ragged jacket with a tail about two inches deep sticking out above the funniest of corduroys.

"Job has two mansions," said Felix. "He lives here chiefly; but he has another home, where his grandfather, Mr. Tudge, the stone-breaker, lives. My mother is very good to Job, Miss Lyon. She has made him a little bed in a cupboard, and she gives him sweetened porridge."

The exquisite goodness implied in these words of Felix impressed Esther the more, because in her hearing his talk

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

had usually been of a less affectionate character. Looking at Mrs. Holt, she saw that her eyes had lost their bleak northeasterly expression, and were shining with some mildness on little Job, who had turned round toward her, propping his head against Felix.

"Well, why shouldn't I be motherly to the child, Miss Lyon?" said Mrs. Holt, whose strong powers of argument required the file of an imagined contradiction, if there were no real one at hand. "I never was hard-hearted, and I never will be. It was Felix picked the child up and took to him, you may be sure, for there's nobody else master where he is; but I wasn't going to beat the orphan child and abuse him because of that, and him as straight as an arrow when he's stript, and me so fond of children, and only had one of my own to live." In like manner Mrs. Holt continued to talk until interrupted by Felix, who burst in: "Oh, but, mother, it's no use being so wrapt up in children. They're not always a comfort to one. They grow out of being good very fast. Here's Job Tudge, now," continued Felix, turning the little one round on his knee, and holding his head by the back—"Job's limbs will get lanky; this little fist, that looks like a puff-ball and can hide nothing bigger than a gooseberry, will get large and bony, and perhaps want to clutch more than its share; these wide blue eyes that tell me more truth than Job knows, will narrow and narrow and try to hide truth that Job would be better without knowing; this little negative nose will become long and self-asserting; and this little tongue—put out thy tongue, Job"—Job, awe-struck under this ceremony, put out a little red tongue very timidly—"this tongue, hardly bigger than a rose-leaf, will get large and thick, wag out of season, do mischief, brag and cant for gain or vanity, and cut as cruelly, for all its clumsiness, as if it were a sharp-edged

JOB TUDGE AND HARRY TRANSCOME

blade. Big Job will perhaps be naughty——” As Felix, speaking with the loud, emphatic distinctness habitual to him, brought out this terribly familiar word, Job’s sense of mystification became too painful: he hung his lip, and began to cry.

“ See there,” said Mrs. Holt, “ you’re frightening the innocent child with such talk—and it’s enough to frighten them that think themselves the safest.”

“ Look here, Job, my man,” said Felix, setting the boy down and turning him toward Esther; “ go to Miss Lyon, ask her to smile at you, and that will dry up your tears like the sunshine.”

Job put his two brown fists on Esther’s lap, and she stooped to kiss him. Then she rose to go, and presently Felix and his mother were alone.

Many weeks later than this Esther Lyon made a visit at Transome Court, and between her and little Harry there was an extraordinary fascination. This creature, with the soft, broad, brown cheeks, low forehead, great black eyes, tiny well-defined nose, fierce biting tricks toward every person and thing he disliked, was a human specimen such as Esther had never seen before, and she seemed equally original in Harry’s experience. At first sight her light complexion and her blue gown, probably also her sunny smile and her hands stretched out toward him, seemed to make a show for him as of a new sort of bird, and he threw himself backward against his “ Gappa,” as he called old Mr. Transome, and stared at this newcomer with the gravity of a wild animal. But she had no sooner sat down on the sofa in the library than he climbed up to her, and began to treat her as an attractive object in natural history, snatched up her curls with his brown fist, and, discovering that there

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

was a little ear under them, pinched it and blew into it, pulled at her coronet of plaits, and seemed to discover with satisfaction that it did not grow at the summit of her head, but could be dragged down and altogether undone. Then finding that she laughed, tossed him back, kissed, and pretended to bite him—in fact, was an animal that understood fun—he rushed off and made his man Dominic bring a small menagerie of white mice, squirrels, and birds, with Moro, the black spaniel, to make her acquaintance. Whomsoever Harry liked, it followed that Mr. Transome must like: “Gappa” along with Nimrod, the retriever, was part of the menagerie, and perhaps endured more than all the other live creatures in the way of being tumbled about. Seeing that Esther bore having her hair pulled down quite merrily, and that she was quite willing to be harnessed and beaten, the old man began to confide to her, in his feeble, smiling, and rather jerking fashion, Harry’s remarkable feats: how he had one day, when Gappa was asleep, unpinned a whole drawerful of beetles, to see if they would fly away; then, disgusted with their stupidity, was about to throw them all on the ground and stamp on them, when Dominic came in and rescued these valuable specimens; also how he had subtly watched Mrs. Transome at the cabinet where she kept her medicines, and, when she had left it for a little while without locking it, had gone to the drawers and scattered half the contents on the floor. But what old Mr. Transome thought the most wonderful proof of an almost preternatural cleverness was, that Harry would hardly ever talk, but preferred making inarticulate noises, or combining syllables after a method of his own.

“He can talk well enough if he likes,” said Gappa, evidently thinking that Harry, like the monkeys, had deep reasons for his reticence.

JOB TUDGE AND HARRY TRANSOME

"You mind him," he added, nodding at Esther, and shaking with low-toned laughter. "You'll hear: he knows the right names of things well enough, but he likes to make his own. He'll give you one all to yourself before long."

And when Harry seemed to have made up his mind distinctly that Esther's name was "Boo," Mr. Transome nodded at her with triumphant satisfaction, and Esther was glad when she saw the old man's joy in the happy world created for him by Harry's presence.

Just before Esther went to visit at Transome Court, Felix Holt had become involved in serious trouble by attempting to quell a riot in the little town of Treby Magna, was unjustly supposed to be himself one of the rioters, and was thrown into the Loamshire jail. Mrs. Holt, in wild despair at this crushing blow, appealed to everyone from whom she thought she could gain help to prove her son's innocence. In pursuance of that object she determined to ask aid of Harold Transome, who, though so widely different from her son in the matters of wealth and position, yet, like Felix, was a Radical in his political views.

One fine February day, when already the golden and purple crocuses were on the terrace—one of those flattering days which sometimes precede the northeast winds of March and make believe the coming spring will be enjoyable—Esther Lyon and Harold Transome were walking about the grounds of Transome Court at mid-day.

They were a little in advance of the rest of the party, who were retarded by various causes. Old Mr. Transome followed with his shuffling, uncertain walk, and little Harry was dragging a toy vehicle, on the seat of which he had insisted on tying Moro, with a piece of scarlet drapery round him, making him look like a barbaric prince in a chariot. Moro objected to this, and barked with feeble snappishness

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

as the tyrannous lad ran forward, then whirled the chariot round, and ran back to "Gappa," then came to a dead stop, which overset the chariot, that he might watch a water-spaniel run for a hurled stick and bring it in his mouth. Nimrod kept close to his old master's legs, and Dominic walked by, taking care of both young and old.

Presently Harold and Esther turned, and saw an elderly woman advancing with a tiny red-haired boy, scantly attired as to his jacket, which merged into a small sparrow tail, a little higher than his waist, but muffled as to his throat with a blue woollen comforter. Esther recognised the pair too well, and felt very uncomfortable. It would be a great mortification to her to have Felix Holt, whom she so much admired, in any way represented to the family at Transome Court by his mother, whose appearance and manner would in any case do him scant justice. And now it was especially important that his cause should be advanced in every possible way.

But in spite of her annoyance, Esther greeted Mrs. Holt kindly, and stooped to pat little Job, while Mrs. Holt curtsied as if to the entire group, now including even the dogs, who showed various degrees of curiosity, especially as to what kind of game the smaller animal Job might prove to be.

As Esther noticed little Job, Mrs. Holt remarked: "Yes—you know him, Miss Lyon, you know the orphian child as Felix brought home for me that am his mother to take care of. And it's what I've done—nobody more so—though it's trouble is my reward."

Esther had raised herself again, to stand in helpless endurance of whatever might be coming. But by this time young Harry, attracted even more than the dogs by the appearance of Job Tudge, had come round dragging his

JOB TUDGE AND HARRY TRANSOME

chariot, and placed himself close to the pale child, whom he exceeded in height and breadth, as well as in depth of colouring. He looked into Job's eyes, peeped round at the tail of his jacket, and pulled it a little, and then, taking off the tiny cloth cap, observed with much interest the tight red curls which had been hidden underneath it. Job looked at his inspector with the round blue eyes of astonishment, until Harry, purely by way of experiment, took a bon-bon from a fantastic wallet which hung over his shoulder, and applied the test to Job's lips. The result was satisfactory to both. Everyone had been watching this small comedy, and when Job crunched the bon-bon while Harry looked down at him inquiringly and patted his back, there was general laughter except on the part of Mrs. Holt, who was shaking her head slowly, and slapping the back of her left hand with the painful patience of a tragedian whose part is in abeyance to an ill-timed introduction of the humorous.

"I hope Job's cough has been better lately," said Esther, in mere uncertainty as to what it would be desirable to say or do.

"I dare say you hope so, Miss Lyon," said Mrs. Holt, looking at the distant landscape. Then after a moment's pause she changed the subject and directed her flow of eloquence toward Harold Transome, pleading for help to gain her son's release, until Esther, by way of breaking this awkward scene said, "I'm sure you must be tired with your long walk, and little Job, too. Aren't you, Job?" she added, stooping to caress the child, who was timidly shrinking from Harry's invitation to him to pull the little chariot—Harry's view being that Job would make a good horse for him to beat, and would run faster than "Gappa."

Harold, taking note of Esther's attempts to alter the situation, here said with decision:

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

"Mrs. Holt, I assure you that enough has been said to make me use my best efforts for your son's release. Dominic, show Mrs. Holt the way to the house, and see that she is made comfortable, and that somebody takes her back to Treby in the buggy."

"I will go back with Mrs. Holt," said Esther, with a great effort, but Harold shook his head. "Let Mrs. Holt have time to rest," he said. "We shall have returned, and you can see her before she goes. We will say good-bye for the present, Mrs. Holt."

The poor woman was not sorry to have the prospect of rest and food, especially for "the orphan child," of whom she was tenderly careful, and when she saw Dominic pick up Job and hoist him on his arm for a little while by way of making acquaintance, she regarded him with genuine approval.

As soon as Esther and Harold were left alone, they entered into a most serious conversation concerning Felix Holt, and how to win his freedom; but presently Esther remembered that she must see Mrs. Holt and little Job again, so she entered the door that opened on the terrace, while Harold went round to the stables.

When Esther had been upstairs and descended again into the large entrance-hall, she found its stony spaciousness made lively by human figures extremely unlike the statues which were its chief furnishings. Since Harry insisted on playing with Job again, Mrs. Holt and her orphan, after dining, had just been brought to this delightful scene for a game of hide-and-seek, and for exhibiting the climbing powers of the two pet squirrels. Mrs. Holt sat on a stool, in singular relief against the pedestal of Apollo, while Harry, in his bright red and purple, flitted about like a great tropic bird after the sparrow-tailed Job, who hid himself

JOB TUDGE AND HARRY TRANSCOME

with much intelligence behind the scagliola pillars and the pedestals; while one of the squirrels perched itself on the head of the tallest statue, and the other was already peeping down from among the heavy stuccoed angels on the ceiling, near the summit of a pillar.

Mrs. Holt held on her lap a basket filled with good things for Job, and seemed much soothed by pleasant company and excellent treatment. As Esther, descending softly and unobserved, leaned over the stone banisters and looked at the scene for a minute or two, she saw that Mrs. Holt's attention, having been directed to the squirrel which had scampered on to the head of a statue of Silenus, had been drawn downward to the infant Bacchus in its arms.

"It's most pretty to see its little limbs, and the gentleman holding it," she exclaimed tactfully. "I should think he was amiable by his looks; but it was odd he should have his likeness took without any clothes. Was he Transome by name?"

Before there was any chance for an answer to this remarkable question, old Mr. Transome, who since his walk had been having forty winks on the sofa in the library, came out to look for Harry. Mrs. Holt rose and curtsied with a proud respect, and at once began to urge upon him also the necessity of release for her imprisoned son. Like all orators, Mrs. Holt waxed louder and more energetic in her argument, and poor, feeble-minded, old Mr. Transome, getting more and more frightened by the eloquence of this severe-spoken woman, stood helplessly forgetful that if he liked he might turn round and walk away.

Little Harry, alive to anything that had relation to Gappa, had paused in his game, and, rushing toward Mrs. Holt, proceeded to beat her with his mimic jockey's whip. While Dominic rebuked him and pulled him off, the dogs began to

BOYS AND GIRLS *from* GEORGE ELIOT

bark anxiously, and the scene was becoming alarming even to the squirrels, which scrambled as far off as possible.

Esther, who had been waiting for an opportunity to interfere, now came up to Mrs. Holt and said soothingly: "Dear Mrs. Holt, do rest comforted, I assure you, you have done the utmost that can be done by your words. Your visit has not been thrown away. See how the children have enjoyed it! I saw little Job actually laughing. I think I never saw him do more than smile before." Then turning round to Dominic, she said, "Will the buggy come round to this door?"

This hint was sufficient. Dominic went to see if the vehicle was ready, and although there was a fresh resistance raised in Harry by the threatened departure of Job, who had seemed an invaluable addition to the menagerie of tamed creatures, Esther soon had the relief of seeing the visitors depart, and there is no evidence to prove that black-eyed little Harry of Transome Court and frail little Job, the orphan, ever met again.

SEP 24 1906

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2009

Preservation Technologies

A WORLD LEADER IN COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 490 737 1